

“Ho! Jason, Siegfried, Bedivere,  
Thor, Sinbad, Captain Kidd and Nero!

Behold the ship that’s drawing near  
With mast-perched Me, the conquering hero!”



THE  
BUBBLE BALLADS

BY  
MELVILLE CHATER

DRAWINGS BY  
GERTRUDE A. KAY



NEW YORK  
THE CENTURY CO.  
1914

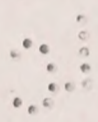
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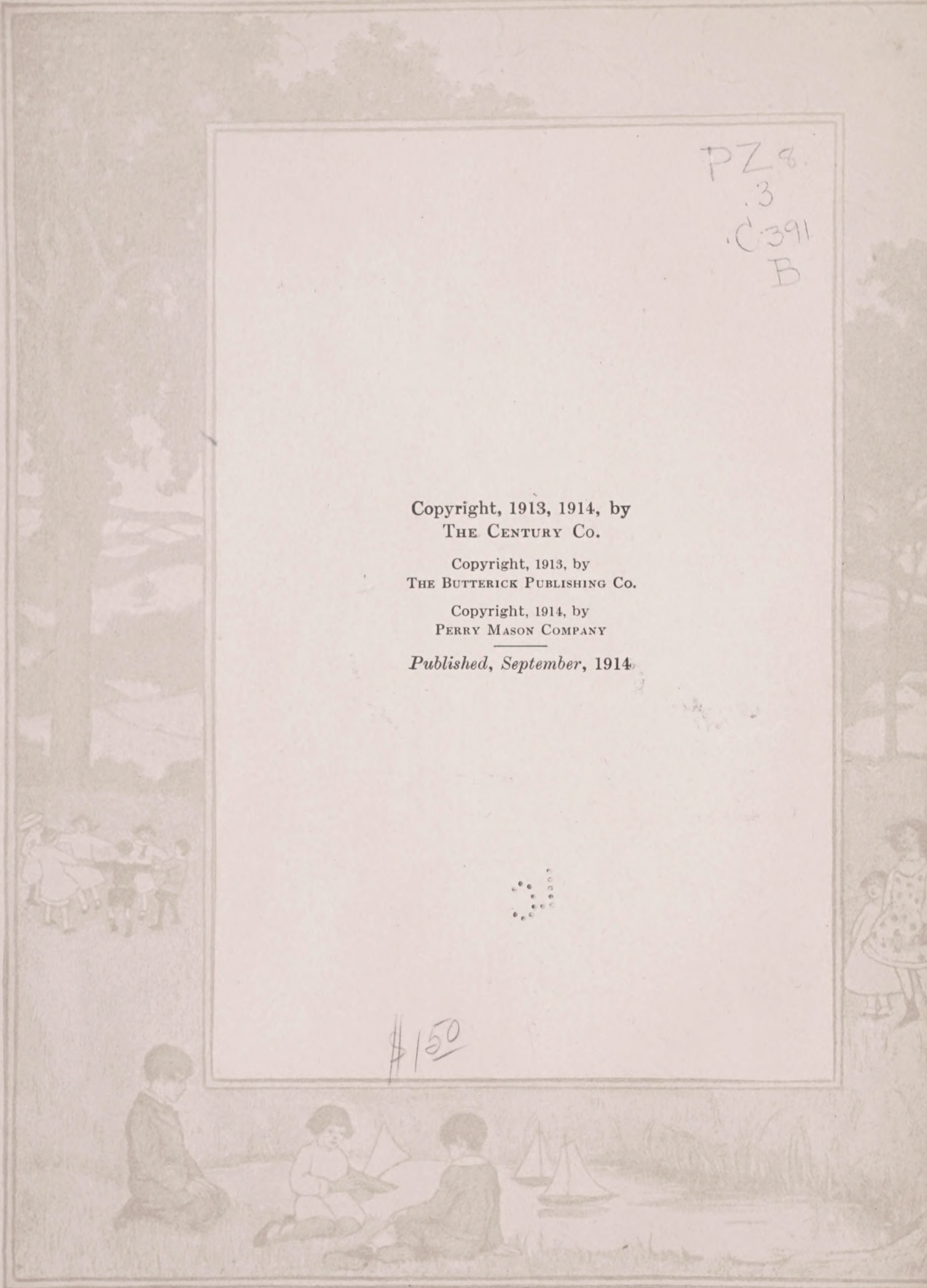
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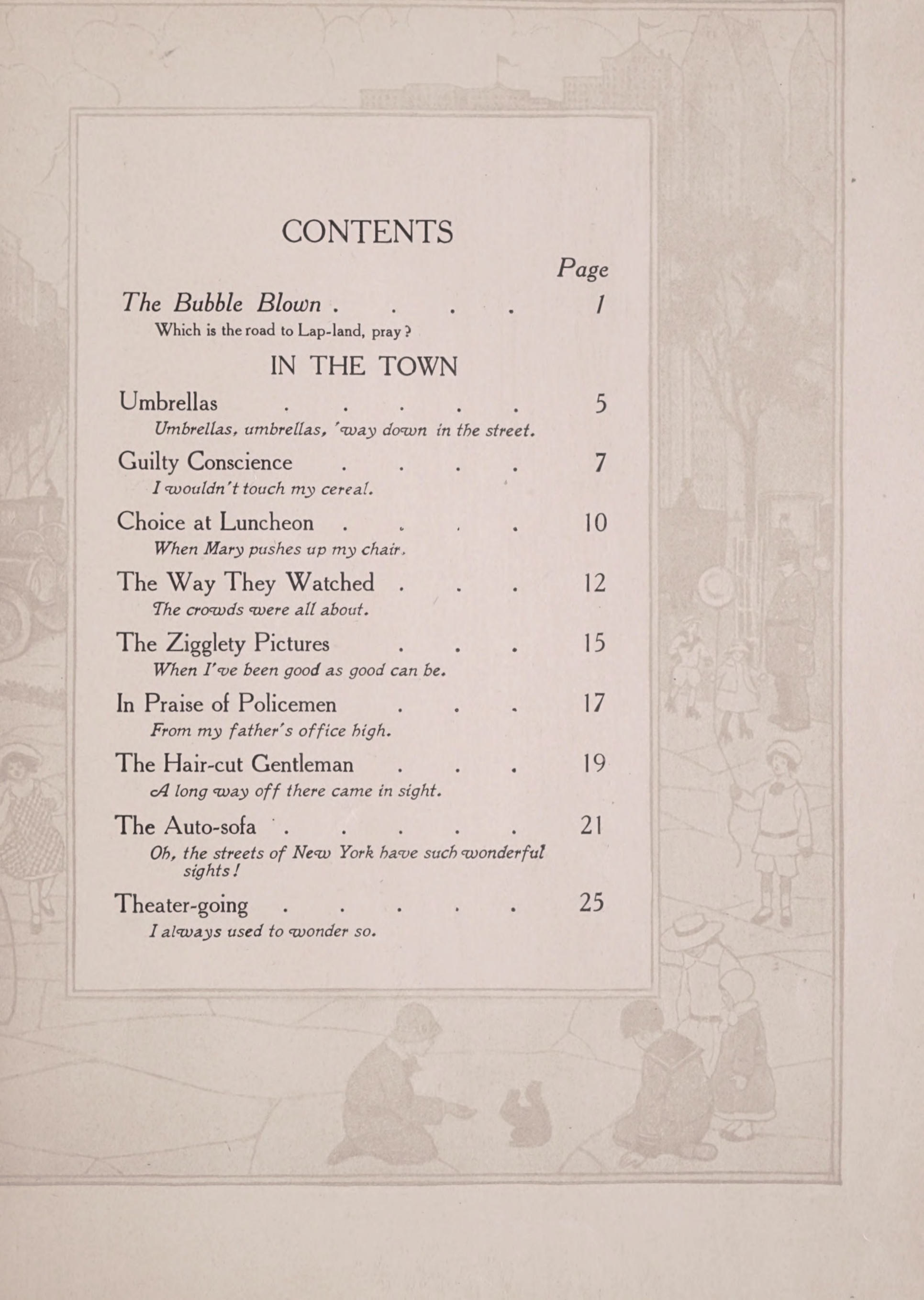


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## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>The Bubble Blown</i> . . . . .	1
<i>Which is the road to Lap-land, pray?</i>	
IN THE TOWN	
<i>Umbrellas</i> . . . . .	5
<i>Umbrellas, umbrellas, 'way down in the street.</i>	
<i>Guilty Conscience</i> . . . . .	7
<i>I wouldn't touch my cereal.</i>	
<i>Choice at Luncheon</i> . . . . .	10
<i>When Mary pushes up my chair.</i>	
<i>The Way They Watched</i> . . . . .	12
<i>The crowds were all about.</i>	
<i>The Zigglety Pictures</i> . . . . .	15
<i>When I've been good as good can be.</i>	
<i>In Praise of Policemen</i> . . . . .	17
<i>From my father's office high.</i>	
<i>The Hair-cut Gentleman</i> . . . . .	19
<i>A long way off there came in sight.</i>	
<i>The Auto-sofa</i> . . . . .	21
<i>Oh, the streets of New York have such wonderful sights!</i>	
<i>Theater-going</i> . . . . .	25
<i>I always used to wonder so.</i>	



Hero-worship . . . . .	27
<i>There's statues in the museum.</i>	
The Great Spirit . . . . .	30
<i>The Christmas stores from end to end.</i>	
Department Stores . . . . .	32
<i>When mother shops for yards and such.</i>	
Newsboys . . . . .	34
<i>The newsboys are a jolly crew.</i>	
The Weather-man . . . . .	37
<i>I've heard there's an office high over the street.</i>	
An Apology for the Sparrow . . . . .	39
<i>He's small, he's quick, he's pert.</i>	
Underground Travel . . . . .	42
<i>Deep under street and store and park.</i>	
Roller-skating . . . . .	43
<i>Sing a song of roller-skates! Spring is in the land!</i>	
The Homeless . . . . .	45
<i>The country places have no lights.</i>	
The Fairies' Swing . . . . .	47
<i>Bridge across the river twisty.</i>	
The Pleasures of Imagination . . . . .	49
<i>I've got a little motor-car.</i>	
Various Creatures . . . . .	51
<i>To Central Park we journeyed.</i>	
The Very Kind Man . . . . .	54
<i>We see a man, my nurse and I.</i>	



Ambitions . . . . .	56
<i>If I were a peanut-man, let us suppose.</i>	
The Wasted Hole . . . . .	58
<i>Upon the Square across the way.</i>	
The Elevated . . . . .	60
<i>Twisty stairs across the way.</i>	
The Tiptoe Lady . . . . .	63
<i>She stands upon a building tall.</i>	
The Checker-board Hotel . . . . .	65
<i>Windows, windows, tiny windows.</i>	
The Alphabet of Street-sights . . . . .	67
<i>A is for Arc-lamps, in rows through the night.</i>	
Distant Skyscrapers . . . . .	69
<i>They're tall, they're steep.</i>	
Letter-boxes . . . . .	71
<i>Upon our corner lamp-post tall a letter-box you'll view.</i>	

### IN THE COUNTRY

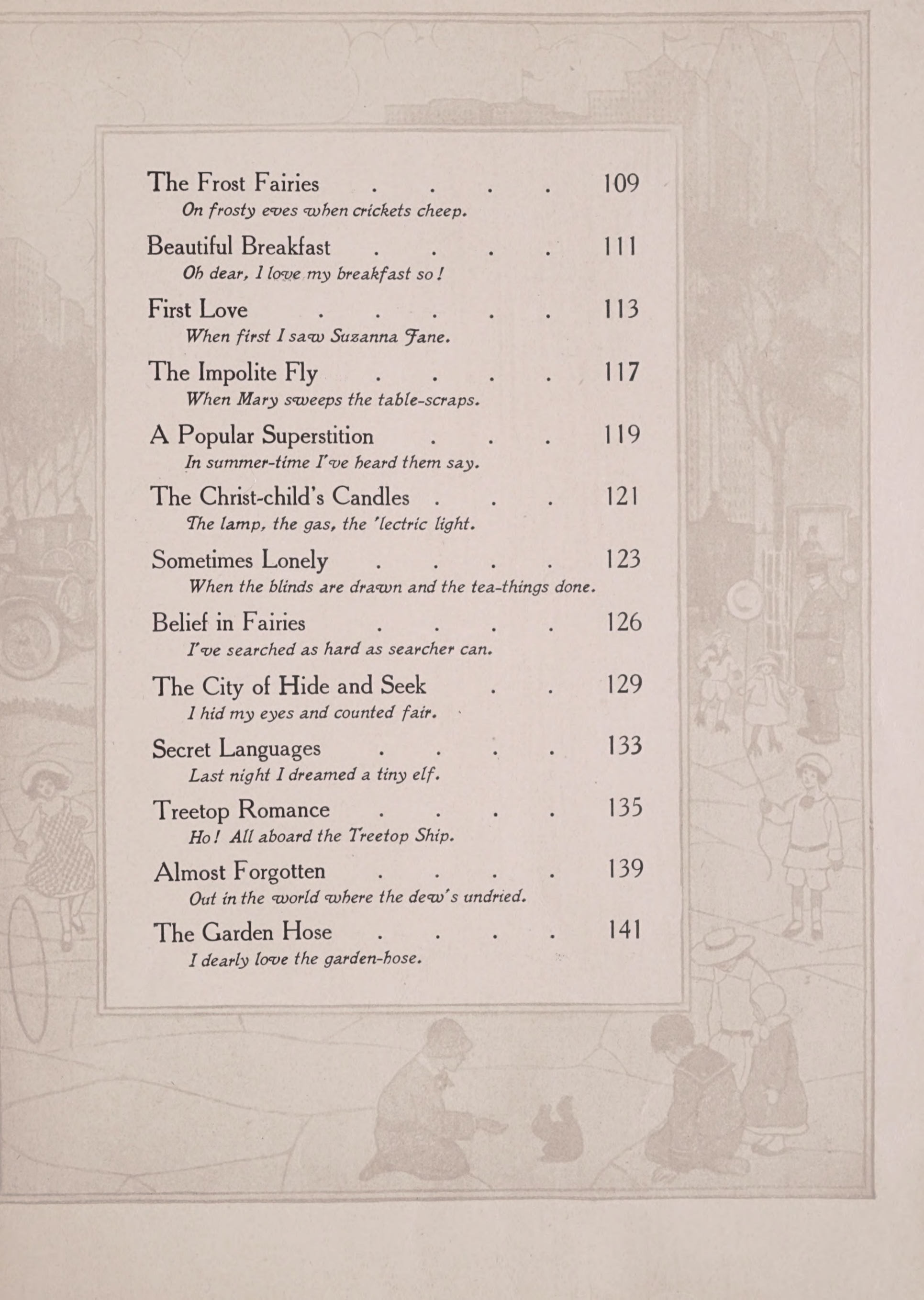
The Behavior of Kites . . . . .	75
<i>The treetops sing, the lilacs sway.</i>	
Wheatfield Bay . . . . .	77
<i>I climbed the crooked apple-tree.</i>	
The Sand-man's Book . . . . .	79
<i>On rainy Sundays when I look.</i>	
The Presidential Problem . . . . .	81
<i>Said my uncle as he watched me at my play.</i>	



The Lost Hour . . . . .	83
<i>I wanted so to march the lane.</i>	
The Deep-sea Fishers . . . . .	85
<i>The good ship Sofa heaves and dips amid the smaller sails.</i>	
The Inexperienced Baby . . . . .	87
<i>My little sister's come! Hooray!</i>	
The Runaway Name . . . . .	89
<i>Oh, Tom a lazy boy was he.</i>	
Purring Explained . . . . .	91
<i>Just put your ear to Flossie's fur.</i>	
Almost Asleep . . . . .	92
<i>Drowsy, clean and warm I feel.</i>	
Making Calls . . . . .	94
<i>Good morning, Mis'er Picture, Sir!</i>	
The All-wrong Day . . . . .	96
<i>I must stay in.</i>	
Leaf-raking . . . . .	98
<i>The cornstalks lean in pointed sheaves.</i>	
Grace before Meat . . . . .	101
<i>God, who dost the sparrow feed.</i>	
Action before Bath . . . . .	102
<i>Ho, now I'm an Injun! Look out for your hair!</i>	
A Precaution . . . . .	104
<i>We took the boat to Silver Beach.</i>	
A Dash for the Pole . . . . .	106
<i>The wondrous thing befell last night.</i>	



The Frost Fairies . . . . .	109
<i>On frosty eves when crickets cheep.</i>	
Beautiful Breakfast . . . . .	111
<i>Oh dear, I love my breakfast so!</i>	
First Love . . . . .	113
<i>When first I saw Suzanna Jane.</i>	
The Impolite Fly . . . . .	117
<i>When Mary sweeps the table-scrap.</i>	
A Popular Superstition . . . . .	119
<i>In summer-time I've heard them say.</i>	
The Christ-child's Candles . . . . .	121
<i>The lamp, the gas, the 'lectric light.</i>	
Sometimes Lonely . . . . .	123
<i>When the blinds are drawn and the tea-things done.</i>	
Belief in Fairies . . . . .	126
<i>I've searched as hard as searcher can.</i>	
The City of Hide and Seek . . . . .	129
<i>I hid my eyes and counted fair.</i>	
Secret Languages . . . . .	133
<i>Last night I dreamed a tiny elf.</i>	
Treetop Romance . . . . .	135
<i>Ho! All aboard the Treetop Ship.</i>	
Almost Forgotten . . . . .	139
<i>Out in the world where the dew's undried.</i>	
The Garden Hose . . . . .	141
<i>I dearly love the garden-hose.</i>	



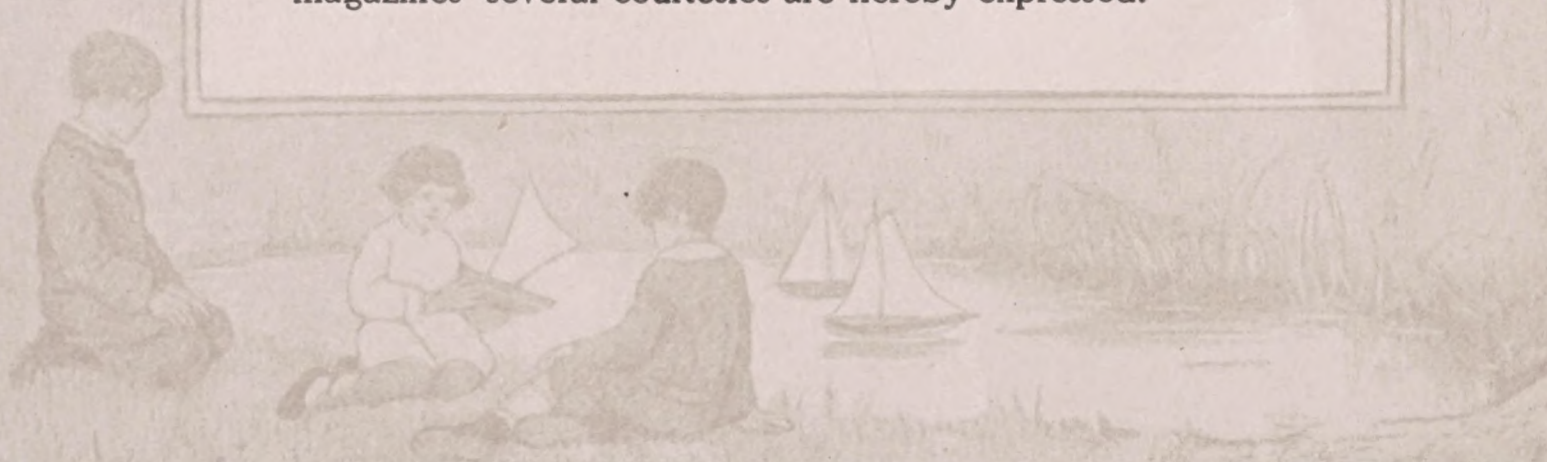
Banister-sliding . . . . . 143  
*In every building tall in town.*

The Launching of Ships . . . . . 145  
*Brook a-swirl through the woodlands wild.*

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*The Bubble Broken* . . . . . 148  
Of all the grown-up folk we know.

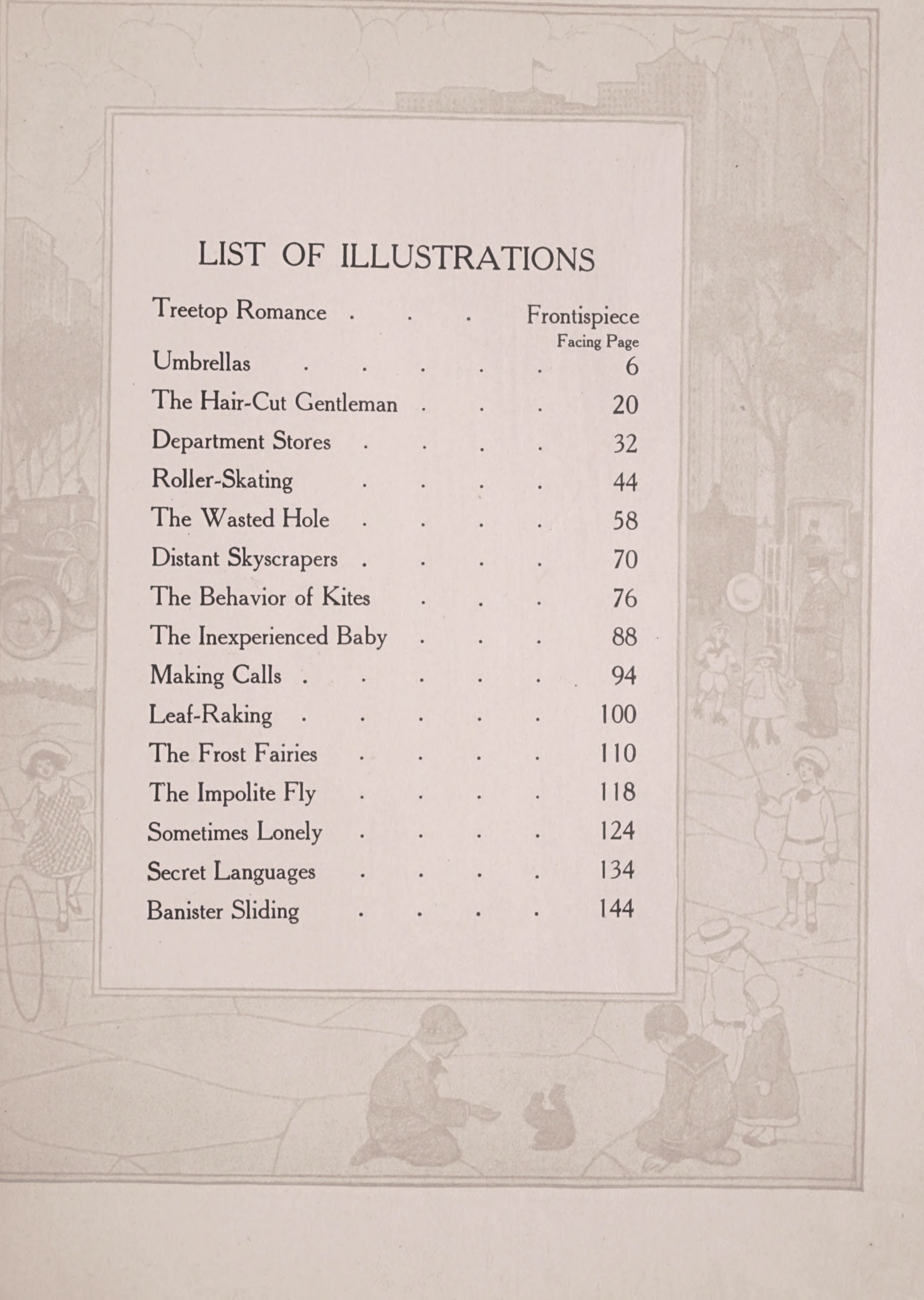
Fifteen of these ballads first appeared in *St. Nicholas*; others appeared in *The Ladies' Home Journal*, the *Delineator* and the *Youth's Companion*; acknowledgment of which magazines' several courtesies are hereby expressed.





## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Treetop Romance . . . . .		Frontispiece	
		Facing Page	
Umbrellas . . . . .			6
The Hair-Cut Gentleman . . . . .			20
Department Stores . . . . .			32
Roller-Skating . . . . .			44
The Wasted Hole . . . . .			58
Distant Skyscrapers . . . . .			70
The Behavior of Kites . . . . .			76
The Inexperienced Baby . . . . .			88
Making Calls . . . . .			94
Leaf-Raking . . . . .			100
The Frost Fairies . . . . .			110
The Impolite Fly . . . . .			118
Sometimes Lonely . . . . .			124
Secret Languages . . . . .			134
Banister Sliding . . . . .			144





## THE BUBBLE BLOWN

Which is the road to Lap-land, pray ?  
East of the sun and west of the moon,  
Over the hills and far away ?

*Blower of bubbles, ask this boon  
At your mother's knee, whence all roads bear—  
Bear out to Life, ah soon, so soon!*

What shall I take for my journey there ?  
My gun, my sword and a toy or so  
And one big apple for wayside fare ?

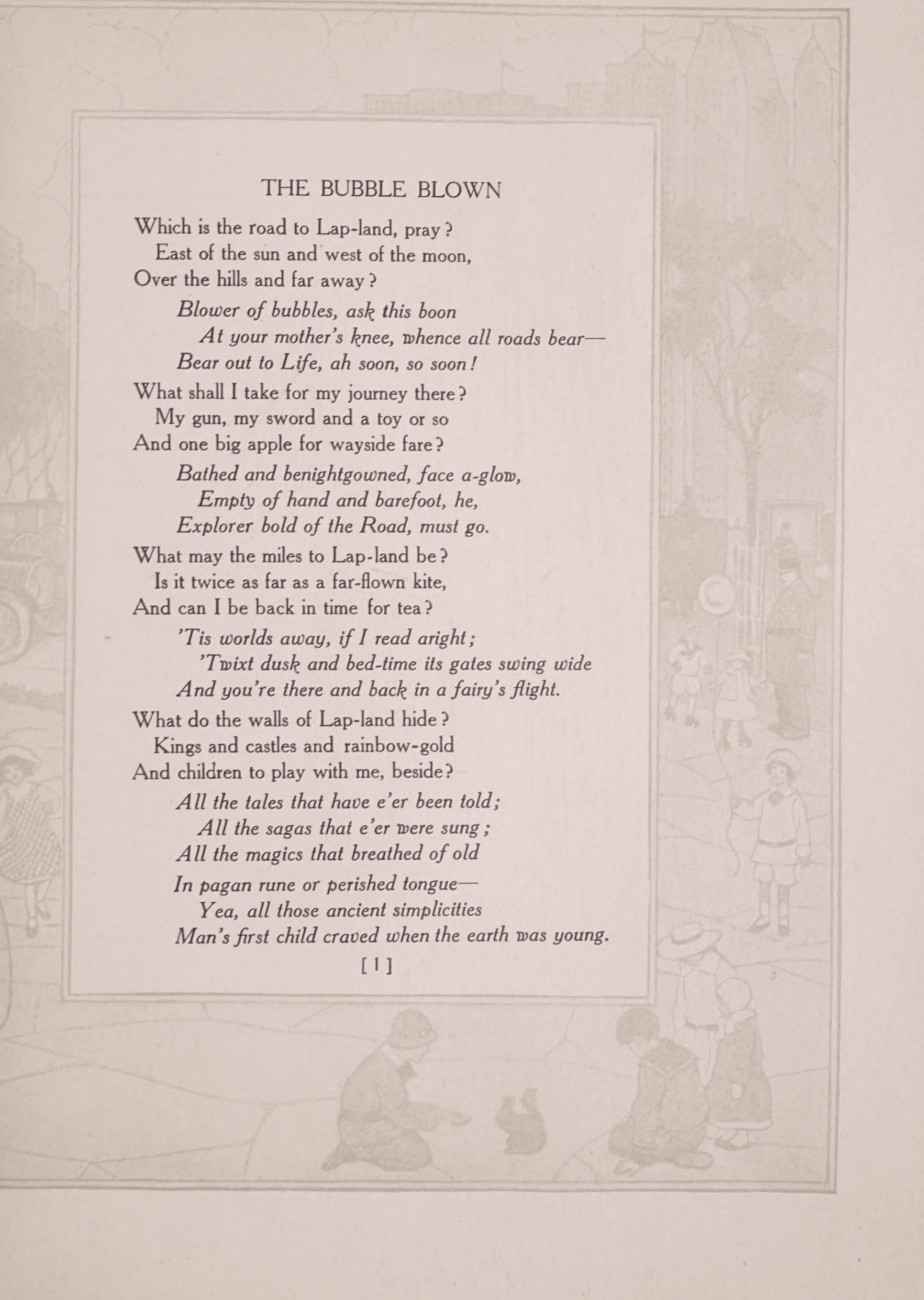
*Bathed and benighted, face a-glow,  
Empty of hand and barefoot, he,  
Explorer bold of the Road, must go.*

What may the miles to Lap-land be ?  
Is it twice as far as a far-flown kite,  
And can I be back in time for tea ?

*'Tis worlds away, if I read aright ;  
'Twixt dusk and bed-time its gates swing wide  
And you're there and back in a fairy's flight.*

What do the walls of Lap-land hide ?  
Kings and castles and rainbow-gold  
And children to play with me, beside ?

*All the tales that have e'er been told ;  
All the sagas that e'er were sung ;  
All the magics that breathed of old  
In pagan rune or perished tongue—  
Yea, all those ancient simplicities  
Man's first child craved when the earth was young.*



And you'll come too? Oh, I want you, please!  
I, knight-errant, and you my guide—  
For games are better with twos or threes.

*Ah, no! To me is the Land denied.  
Thither only a child may go.  
Pass in, forgetting I stand outside.*

*Yet take your basin, your pipe, and blow  
One last big bubble where I may view  
That Land a-swirl in its rainbow glow.*

Oh, how? Please tell! And may I see too?  
Is it kin to the Magic Crystal, pray?  
What *is* a bubble? Now tell me true!

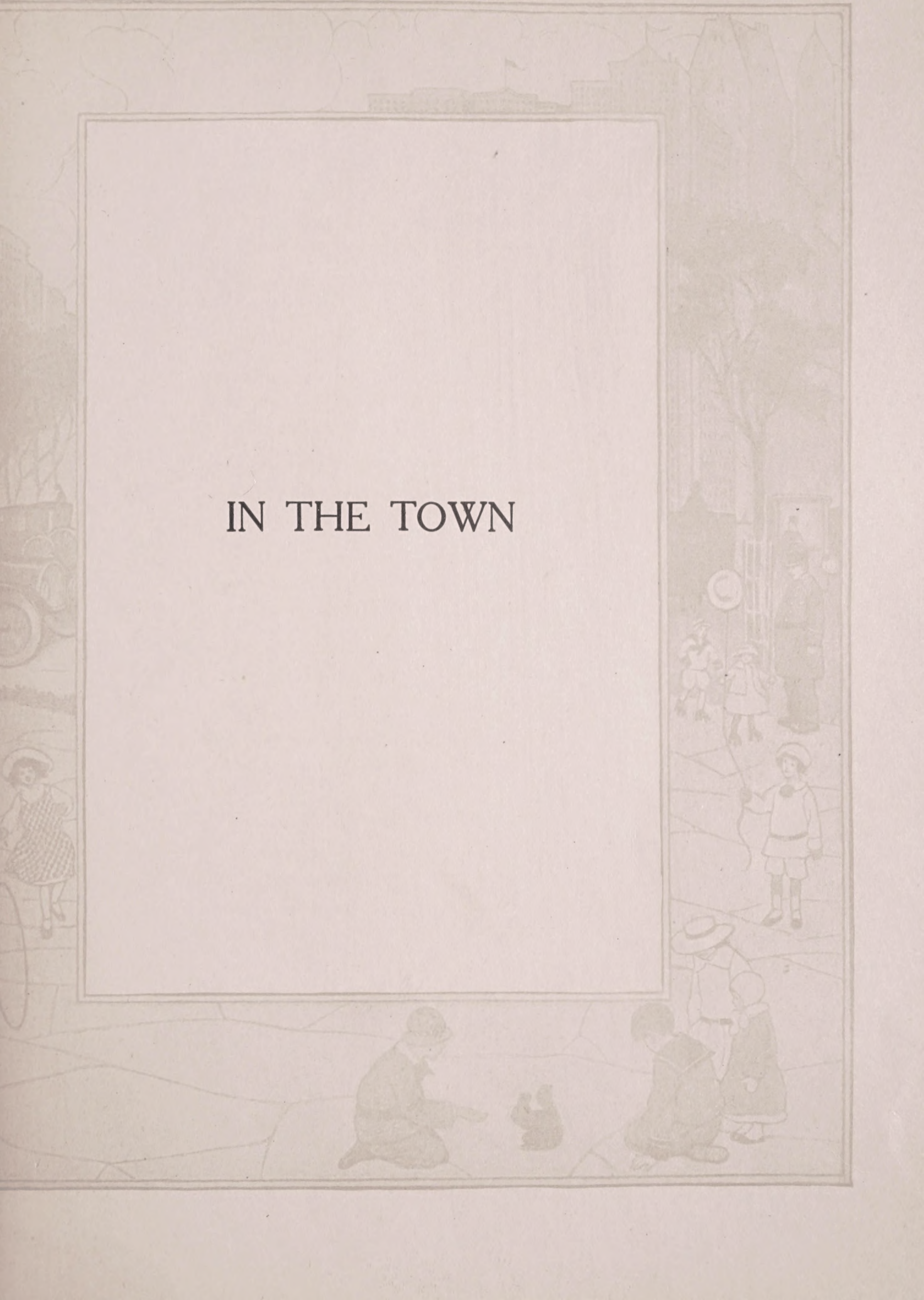
*Perfect symbol of childhood's day:  
The wonder-world of the Real-Unreal;  
A gossamer glory that melts away.*

Then here's my pipe, while we watch and kneel.  
Blow, bubble! Paint it that he may see.  
(How sorry for stay-behinds I feel!)

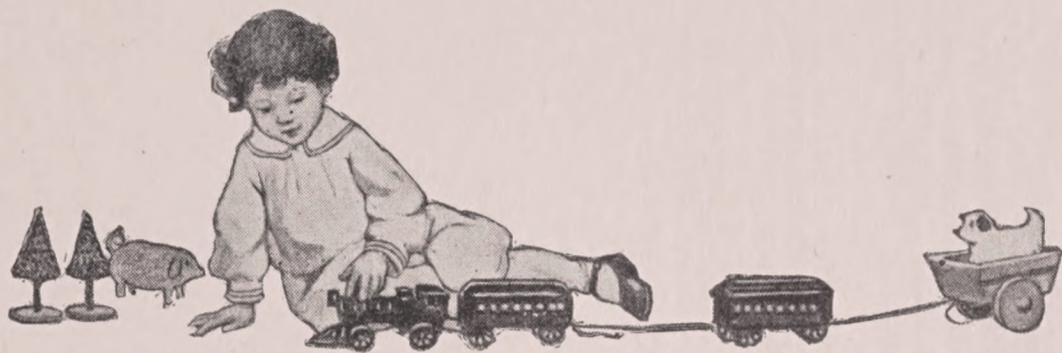
*Nay! This my book shall our bubble be.  
Through a childish pipe, man-breathed, shall  
stream  
Your broken pageant of fantasy.*

*Go, bubble, tinged by that opal gleam  
Fair and fleeting as dew on grass,  
Frail as the Real yet true as the Dream—  
Shimmer a space ere you fall and pass!*

IN THE TOWN







## UMBRELLAS

Umbrellas, umbrellas 'way down in the  
street

Bobbing along through the rain on feet:  
That's how they look as they pass below—  
Umbrellas and feet are the most that show.

Umbrellas, umbrellas, wet pavements and  
me!

I'm watching for mother to come home  
to tea,

But how shall I know her, to wave through  
the pane,

When every umbrella's the same in the  
rain?



Policemen, conductors, and pirates, and  
kings  
Are easily told by their trousers and  
things.  
On days like today when the weather's  
to blame,  
Beneath their umbrellas they'd all look  
the same.







“I'm watching for mother to come home to tea”






## GUILTY CONSCIENCE

I wouldn't touch my cereal,  
I rattled with my spoon,  
Till auntie said unless I ate  
She'd call the doctor soon;  
When suddenly a man appeared  
At breakfast-time one day  
And began to paint a picture  
On the wall across the way.

He was hanging from the housetop  
On a ladder swung in air,  
And the picture that he painted  
Was as big as Herald Square.  
He shifted and he shifted  
With his pots of red and blue,  
And day by day I watched him paint,  
And day by day it grew.

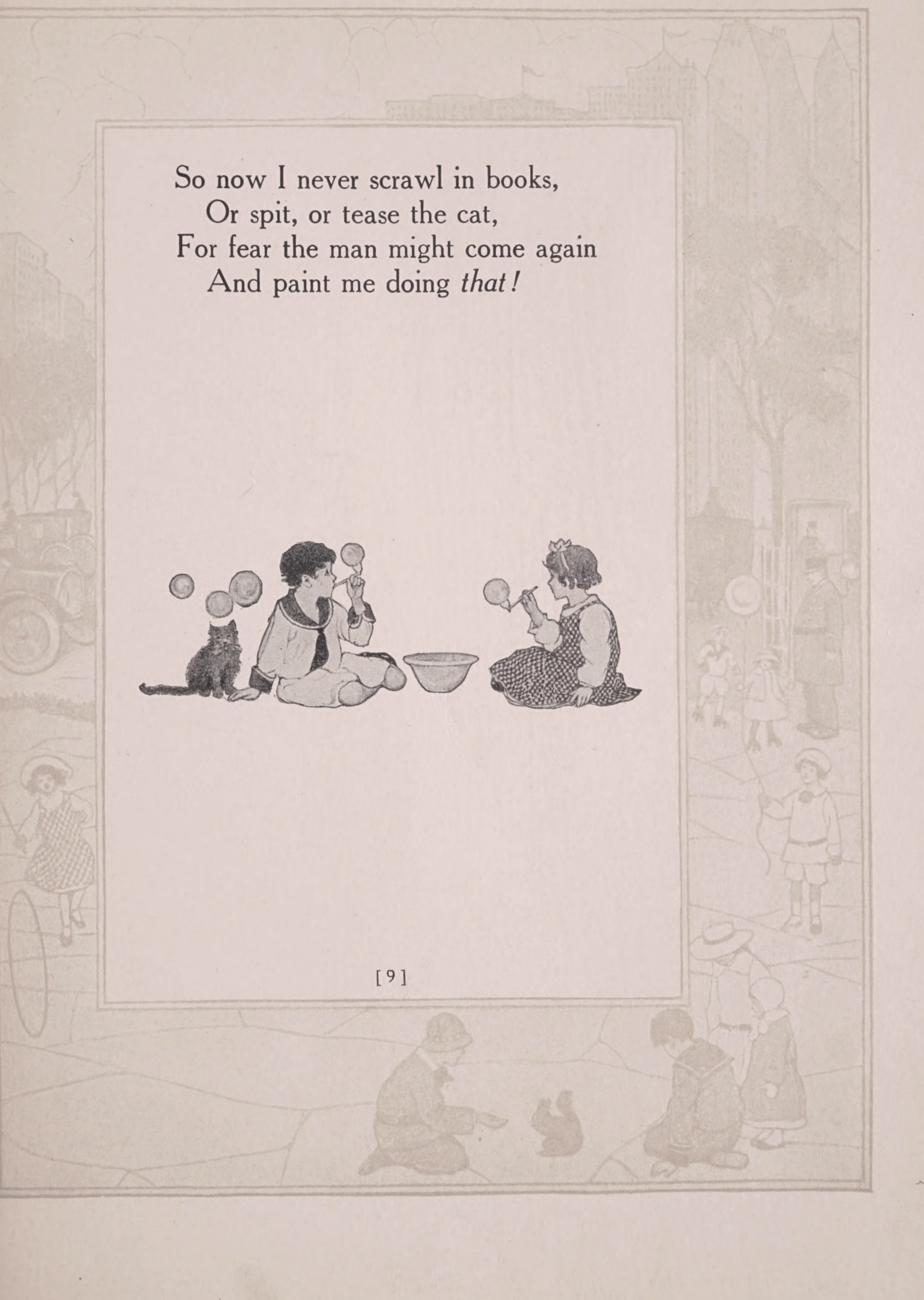


The picture was a little boy  
A-sitting at his tea,  
With bib, and spoon, and cereal  
And yellow hair—like me!  
And underneath was printed this—  
For auntie told me so—  
“Eat Jones & Johnson’s Wheatymeal,  
Or else you’ll never grow!”

It frightened me so horribly  
That, what with auntie’s hints,  
I’ve made a “manly effort” at  
My breakfasts, ever since.  
I’ve grown an inch already—  
You can measure me, and see;  
And now I love my cereal,  
And every one loves me.

It’s funny when you’re doing wrong  
That some one always knows;  
And some one sent that painter-man  
To paint me, I suppose;

So now I never scrawl in books,  
Or spit, or tease the cat,  
For fear the man might come again  
And paint me doing *that!*





## CHOICE AT LUNCHEON

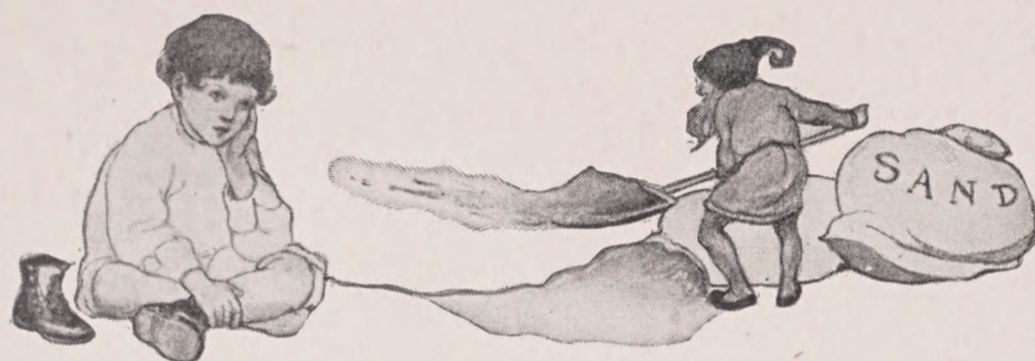
When Mary pushes up my chair  
And asks at luncheon what I wish,  
She always says—it isn't fair—  
“There's egg *or* fish.”

The streets are full of ragged boys,  
My mother says, who starve and beg,  
And never, never get the choice  
Of fish *or* egg.

So I must say my blessing-rhyme  
Before they'll offer either dish,  
To show I'm glad, at luncheon-time,  
Of egg *or* fish.

But, still, I'm naughty as can be,  
And frown, and kick the table-leg,  
Because my truly choice, you see,  
Is fish *and* egg.






## THE WAY THEY WATCHED

The crowds were all about  
Last night, with fuss and din,  
"To watch the Old Year going out,  
The New Year coming in."

They didn't watch a bit  
So far as I could see,  
But marched around, forgetting it,  
As crazy as could be.

Oh, such a noisy crowd!  
Such whistles, yells and cheers!  
And gentlemen blew very loud  
On horns in ladies' ears.





Such rattles, cow-bells, flings  
Of paper snow in pecks!  
And ladies carried ticklely things  
And tickled people's necks.

They teased each other so,  
And beat tin pans, and waved.  
If I did that at home, I know  
They'd say I'd misbehaved.

Then bells rang long and loud,  
And chimes commenced to play,  
And far-off whistles in a crowd  
Began to boom and bray.

And through the boom and bells  
Folks shouted all they could;  
And each one yelled at some one else  
And no one understood.

And though the noise was grand—  
The best I've ever heard—  
I'd rather like to understand  
Exactly what occurred;

I'd like to walk about  
Through all the fuss and din  
And find just *where* Old Year goes out  
And *where* New Year comes in.





## THE ZIGGLETY PICTURES

When I've been good as good can be  
One whole long day of rain or sleet,  
I'm always sent with nurse to see  
The zigglety pictures, for a treat.

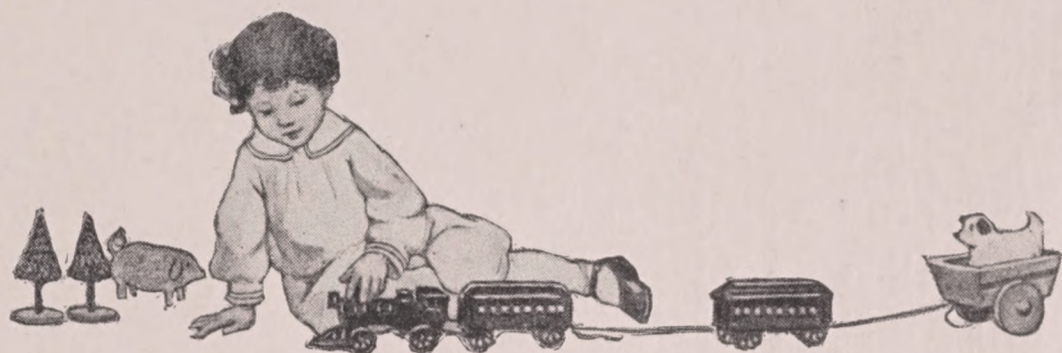
It's dark inside until, at last,  
A whirring sound begins to go;  
Then on the sheet a picture's cast  
With people ziggling to and fro—

Yes, kings and queens and cowboys, too,  
Policemen, fairies, Indian spies.  
All sorts of things I see them do,  
A-ziggling till it hurts my eyes.

If nurse would just forget my tea  
I'd sit there watching, on and on;  
But something blows them out, you see—  
And, when it's dark, where *have* they  
gone?

Then out we go to streets and noise.  
It's white and queer, all roundabout.  
Oh dear, I'd like to be the boys  
Just going in as I come out!





## IN PRAISE OF POLICEMEN

From my father's office high  
Lines of legs for miles I spy—  
Big policemen's legs in blue  
Marching up the Avenue:

Legs that swing and swing and swing,  
Hung, you'd say, across a string;  
Yet I'm not at all afraid,  
'Cause I know they're *on parade*.

Once a year to beat of drum  
Up the Avenue they come,  
Heads in air, so proud on view,  
'Cause their uniforms are new.



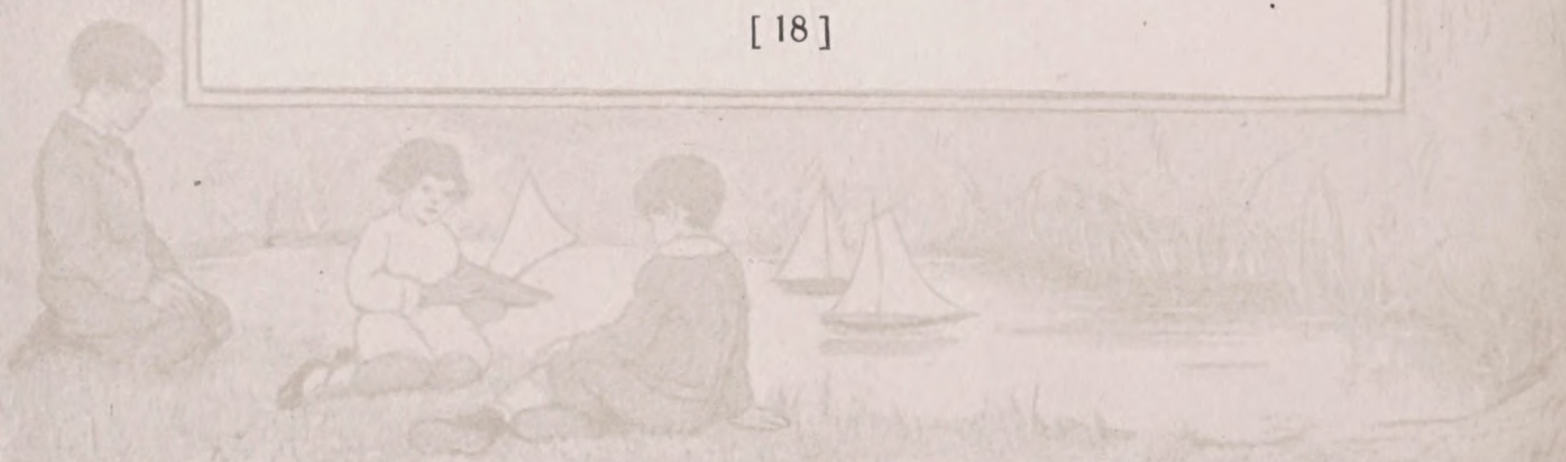
That's the way *I* feel outdoors  
When new clothes come home from stores  
And my mother walks me where  
People turn to smile and stare.

Hi, policemen, row on row!  
I'm your little friend, you know.  
Don't you help me cross the street  
Safely past the horse's feet?

Don't you lift me on the car?  
Don't you always tell "How far?"  
If I lost my mother's hand,  
Aren't you near to take command?

Everything policemen know.  
All policemen love me so!  
They are big and I am small,  
Yet I love policemen all.

When I'm grown I will be good,  
Doing right, as people should.  
Big policemen thus shall be  
Always friends with mine and me.





## THE HAIR-CUT GENTLEMAN

A long way off there came in sight  
A pole with stripes of red and white.  
So like a candy-stick it stood  
You'd almost think it tasted good.  
We walked inside and found him there,  
The gentleman who cut my hair.

And there are bottles, cans and jars,  
And chairs like chairs in parlor-cars,  
And picture papers hung on poles,  
And painted cups in cubbyholes,  
And lots of looking-glasses, too,  
That show you different kinds of you.

The shiny shears went "peck-a-peck"  
As cold as ice, about my neck.

When mother told him, "That's enough,"  
He fizzed my head with smelly stuff  
And helped me down; and everywhere  
About me lay my old dead hair.

And, oh, when everything was through  
I felt so clean and cool and new!  
And I was bought a red balloon  
And smelled so fine all afternoon.  
If I could only have my way  
I'd get my hair cut every day!







GERTRUDE A. KAY

“He fizzed my head with smelly stuff”





## THE AUTO-SOFA

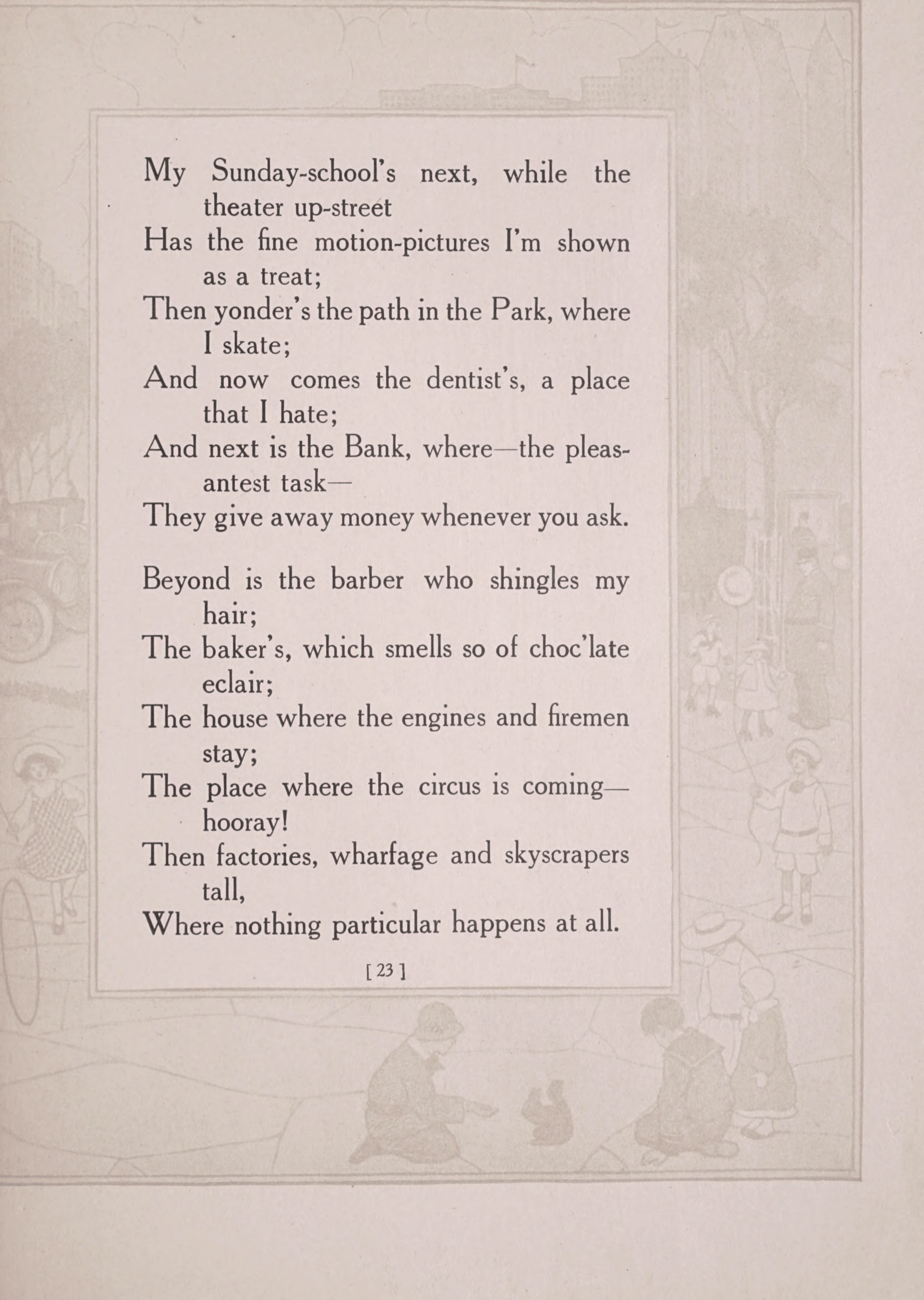
Oh, the streets of New York have such  
wonderful sights—  
Such parks, homes and monuments, build-  
ings and lights,  
Such wonderful people, I'm sure you'll  
agree,  
Including my father, my mother and me!  
Then clamber aboard ere we start from  
the hall,  
For our Sight-seeing Sofa will show you  
it all.

Aboard, leaden soldiers! And, dolls, in  
you squeeze!  
Make room for a mother with kitty-cats,  
please!

Aboard, Teddy-bearies! No barking,  
there, Beau!  
I'm the Megaphone Man, I would have  
you to know.  
Come, Jack-in-the-Box! The chauffeur is  
your part,  
And our Sight-seeing Sofa's just going  
to start.

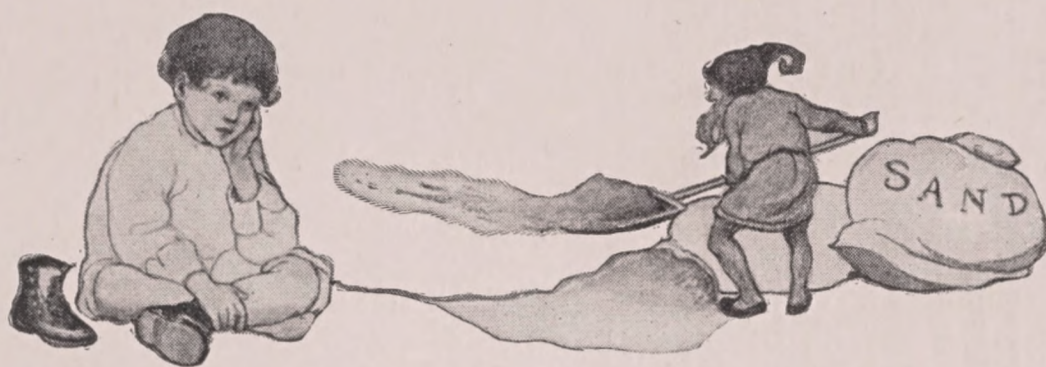
On the right you'll observe 'mid the  
Avenue's shops  
The butcher who sells us our bacon and  
chops;  
And, yonder, the Delicatessen you  
see  
Sends cream for my breakfast and jam  
for my tea;  
While, just on the kerb, there's a stand  
by the stairs  
Where I buy with my pennies bananas  
and pears.

My Sunday-school's next, while the  
theater up-street  
Has the fine motion-pictures I'm shown  
as a treat;  
Then yonder's the path in the Park, where  
I skate;  
And now comes the dentist's, a place  
that I hate;  
And next is the Bank, where—the pleas-  
antest task—  
They give away money whenever you ask.  
Beyond is the barber who shingles my  
hair;  
The baker's, which smells so of choc'late  
eclair;  
The house where the engines and firemen  
stay;  
The place where the circus is coming—  
hooray!  
Then factories, wharfage and skyscrapers  
tall,  
Where nothing particular happens at all.



But now on the kerb, as a tea-time com-  
mand,  
Policeman Eliza is lifting her hand.  
Remember, my hearties, when travelers  
talk  
That you've seen all the principal sights  
of New York.  
Then silence the motor, descend one and  
all,  
For the Sight-seeing Sofa is back in our  
hall.





## THEATER-GOING

I always used to wonder so  
When mother talked of “plays” and  
“scenes,”  
But now at last I really know  
What “going to the theater” means.

I saw it from a car last night,  
And turned and knelt upon the seat—  
That place so wonderful and bright,  
The going-to-the-theater street.

So long it is, I wouldn't try  
To tell you half the passing sights;  
And everywhere from street to sky  
There's lights, and lights, and lights,  
and lights!



They twirl, they jump, they come and go,  
Those lights of green, of gold, of red;  
And some make funny words, and some  
Flash winking pictures overhead.

I've thought about it all to-day,  
That magic street, and now I know  
Why grown-up people, as they say,  
Like "going to the theater" so.

When next they talk the way they do  
Of theaters, and of what to read,  
I'll let them know *I've* been there, too,  
And liked it very much, indeed!








## HERO WORSHIP

There's statues in the Museum,  
In circle, park and square—  
The only gentlemen at whom  
It isn't rude to stare;  
So when I pass a statue-place  
I stare—and sometimes make a face.

There's Washington, and General Grant  
And Presidents, of course;  
And some sit down, and others can't,  
And some bestride a horse.  
A statue, so I've understood,  
You get for being very good.



Now, when I'm rich as rich can be  
I'm going through the town  
And take a hammer 'round with me,  
And knock some statues down,  
Then put new statues where they  
stood  
Of friends of mine, who're *twice* as  
good.

A statue of my parents dear  
Because they love me so ;  
(But none of Nurse, who tweaks my ear!)  
A statue, too, of Beau  
Because he's faithful, night and day,  
And barks the bur-gu-lars away.

Then, statues of policemen kind  
Who clear the way for you ;  
Of men who'll let you hitch behind ;  
A splendid statue, too,  
Of Apple Mary, in the Square,  
Because she gave me, once, a pear.

A statue of the organ-man  
Who plays for me and Beau;  
A statue of Miss Kate McCann,  
The nicest cook I know;  
And statues, too, of aunts and such  
Whose birthday presents pleased me  
much.

Oh yes, for every kindly deed  
I'd raise a statue tall,  
"For being good," thereon you'd read,  
"To those who're young and small."  
And if you ever chance to see  
A *very* tall one, that's of *me*!





## THE GREAT SPIRIT

The Christmas stores, from end to end,  
We walked, to choose, and buy, and look;  
And I'd a dollar bill to spend  
On gifts for all, including cook.

One glimpse I hoped of Santa Claus  
Beneath his load of playthings bent;  
But I was much perplexed because  
I met him everywhere we went.

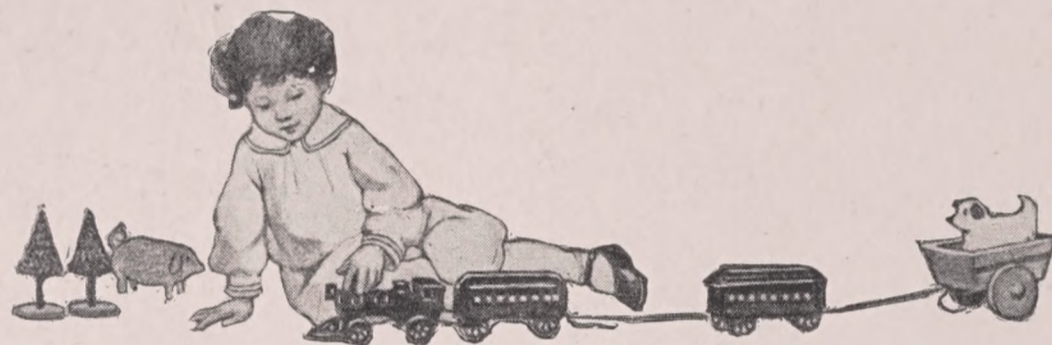
Upon the crowded wintry street  
He stood beside a chimney red,  
And rang a bell, and stamped his feet,  
Expecting pennies, mother said.

We saw him all that afternoon  
Keep bobbing up in street and square.  
At first I was afraid, but soon  
I laughed to see him standing there.

And into every chimney red  
I always dropped a cent or two,  
Because poor children must be fed,  
And kindly acts are good for you.

I think I must have been a dunce  
To be so much perplexed, because  
Of course God's everywhere at once,  
And it's the same with Santa Claus.





## DEPARTMENT STORES

When Mother shops for "yards" and such  
It tries my patience over-much;

She is so *very* slow!

You see, I have to sit quite still,  
Just jiggling up and down, until  
She says, "Let's go."

So if she stops to touch or stare  
I drag her past the counters there  
As fast as fast can be.

Remember, there's a room of toys  
Not far away, that little boys  
Might like to see.



"It tries my patience over-much"





Yet once we're there, with row on row  
Of playthings staring at me so,  
It's just the other way.  
*She* drags *me* by so fast, I mean,  
And says, "My dear, I think we've seen  
Enough to-day."

It's hardly fair, because she spends  
Such hours in buying odds and ends—  
(I wish she wouldn't do it);  
While, let me go among the toys,  
I'd buy enough for twenty boys  
Before she knew it.





## NEWSBOYS

The newsboys are a jolly crew:  
They do just as they wish to do;  
All over town alone they stray,  
Yet no one says, "You'll lose your way."

They shout and yell all day, these boys,  
Yet no one says, "Do stop that noise!"  
They're on the streets till after eight,  
Yet no one says, "Come in! It's late."

And they go barefoot when they choose,  
Yet no one says, "Put on your shoes!"  
They needn't wash their hands or face,  
Yet no one calls it, "A disgrace!"

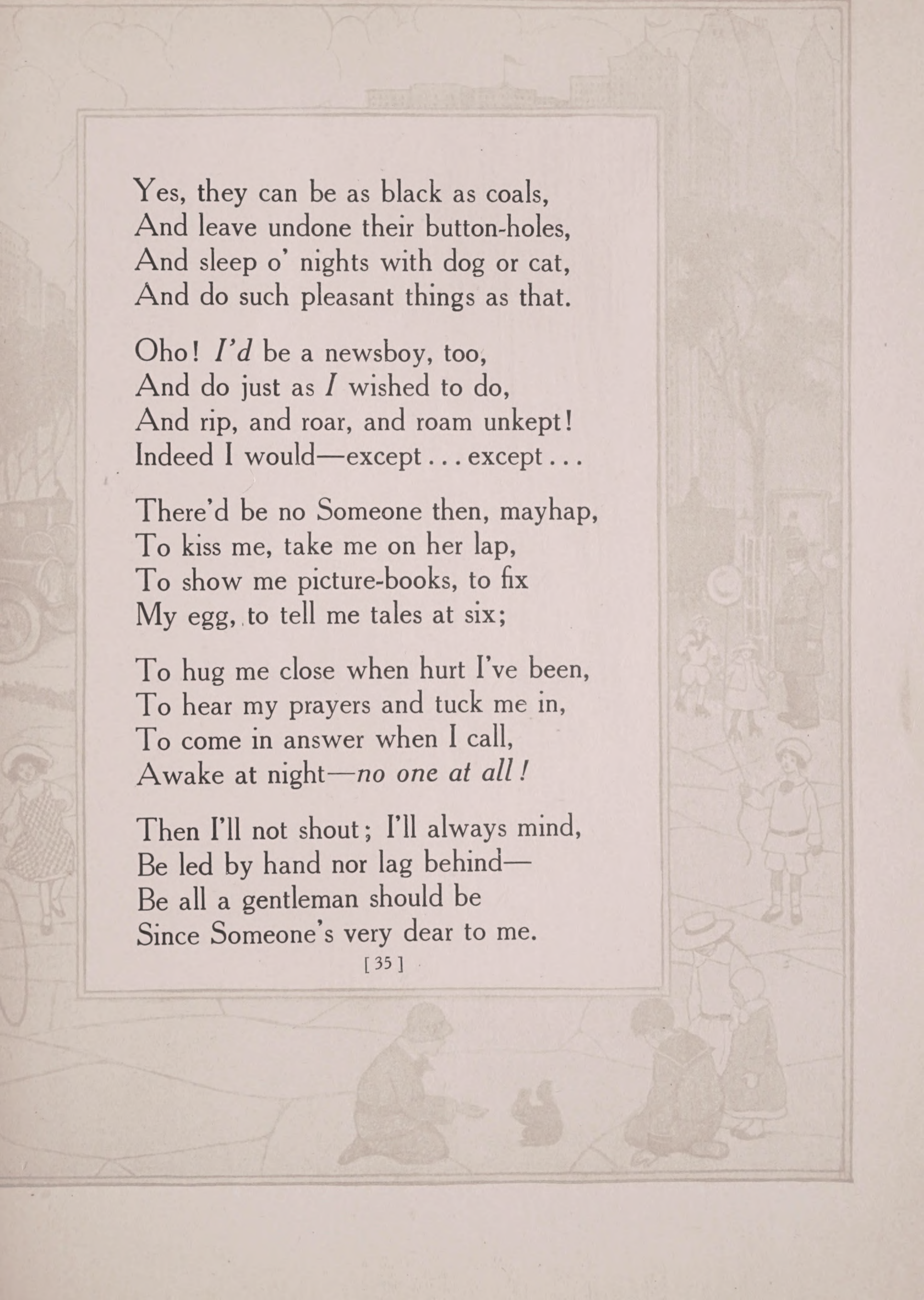
Yes, they can be as black as coals,  
And leave undone their button-holes,  
And sleep o' nights with dog or cat,  
And do such pleasant things as that.

Oho! *I'd* be a newsboy, too,  
And do just as *I* wished to do,  
And rip, and roar, and roam unkept!  
Indeed I would—except . . . except . . .

There'd be no Someone then, mayhap,  
To kiss me, take me on her lap,  
To show me picture-books, to fix  
My egg, to tell me tales at six;

To hug me close when hurt I've been,  
To hear my prayers and tuck me in,  
To come in answer when I call,  
Awake at night—*no one at all!*

Then I'll not shout; I'll always mind,  
Be led by hand nor lag behind—  
Be all a gentleman should be  
Since Someone's very dear to me.



I'll do each button-hole, I hope;  
I'll wash my hands each day, *with soap*;  
And for all newsboys I will pray  
Because I'm better off than they.





## THE WEATHER-MAN

I've heard there's an office high over the  
street

Like a nest at the top of a tree ;  
And there lives a man in the cold and  
the heat

Who says what the weather shall be.

He prints it in papers, both morning and  
night,

Saying changeable, rainy, or fair ;  
But how does he know that he's sending  
what's right

When he lives so far up in the air ?

He ought to come down on the pave-  
ment, I'd say,  
And turn 'round and 'round like a vane  
To see if it's schooltime or afternoon play  
Before he decides to send rain.

If *I* were that man I would make it be  
cool  
Whenever the summer was here ;  
Send warmth in the winter and rain when  
there's school  
And sun all the rest of the year !





## AN APOLOGY FOR THE SPARROW

He's small, he's quick, he's pert,  
He's dressed in common brown ;  
He loves to wallow in the dirt  
In any part of town.

All mornings, noons and nights  
You'll spy him everywhere  
A-hopping up to watch the sights  
In street, and park, and square.

I've seen him in the spring,  
In summer, winter, fall ;  
He thinks the town's the finest thing  
And won't go 'way at all.

[ 39 ]



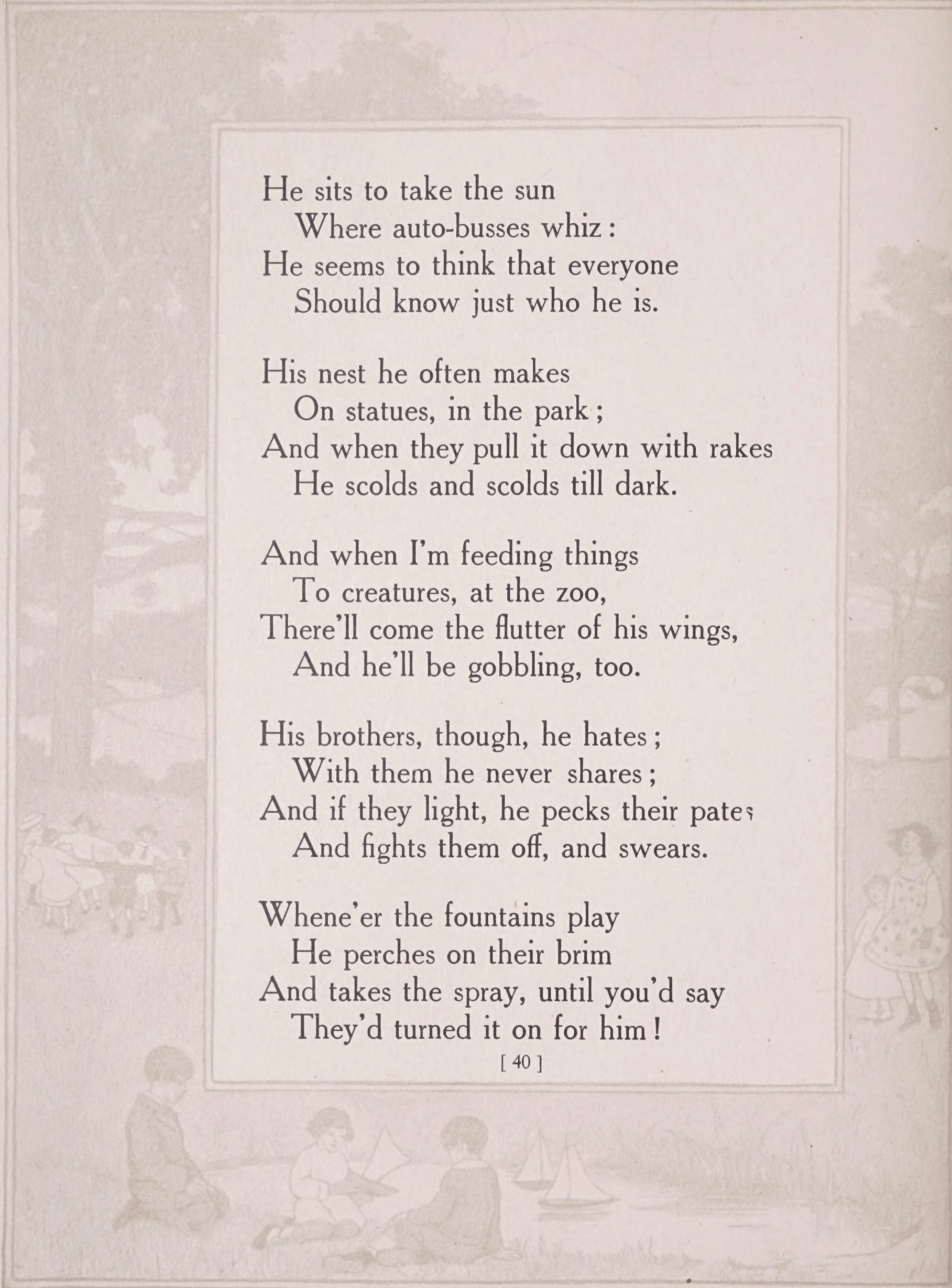
He sits to take the sun  
Where auto-busses whiz :  
He seems to think that everyone  
Should know just who he is.

His nest he often makes  
On statues, in the park ;  
And when they pull it down with rakes  
He scolds and scolds till dark.


And when I'm feeding things  
To creatures, at the zoo,  
There'll come the flutter of his wings,  
And he'll be gobbling, too.

His brothers, though, he hates ;  
With them he never shares ;  
And if they light, he pecks their pates  
And fights them off, and swears.

Whene'er the fountains play  
He perches on their brim  
And takes the spray, until you'd say  
They'd turned it on for him !







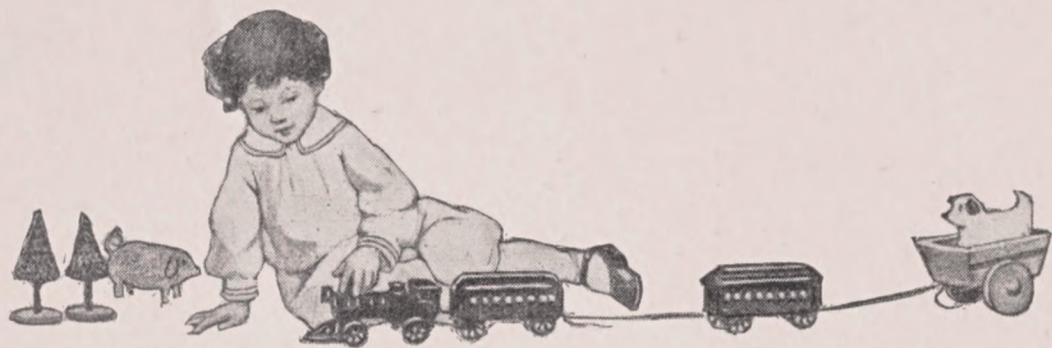
Before parades go by  
He's chattering to the crowd;  
And when it's over, down he'll fly  
To chatter twice as loud—

And though they give no heed  
He tells it far and near:—  
“A pretty sort of sight, indeed,  
’Twould be if *I* weren't here!”

He guzzles, grabs and steals,  
He fusses and he fights;  
He won't make friends, or share his meals,  
Or sleep at home, o' nights.

Perhaps when he was small  
His mother turned him out—  
A fact that would account for all  
His naughty ways, no doubt.

If I'd no mother dear  
I'd grow a wicked man;  
So I must love the bird, it's clear,  
And help him all I can.



## UNDERGROUND TRAVEL

Deep under street, and store, and park,  
A train goes rushing through the dark.  
There might be sun, there might be rain:  
You'd never know, aboard that train.

It runs beneath the river wide,  
And lands you on the other side ;  
Yet, strange as it may seem to you,  
The water never tumbles through.

There's straps to hang on overhead.  
Whoever'd want to sit, instead?  
I'm made to sit on mother's lap,  
But when I'm grown I'll use a strap.

It's queer to have a train where none  
Can see the boats and wharves and sun ;  
Then, too, upon the ferry-trip  
You play at Captain-of-the-ship.



## ROLLER-SKATING

Sing a song of roller-skates! Spring is in  
the land.

I've peanuts in my pockets and my hockey-  
stick in hand.

Up the slope, and down the slope, and  
roundabout the park!

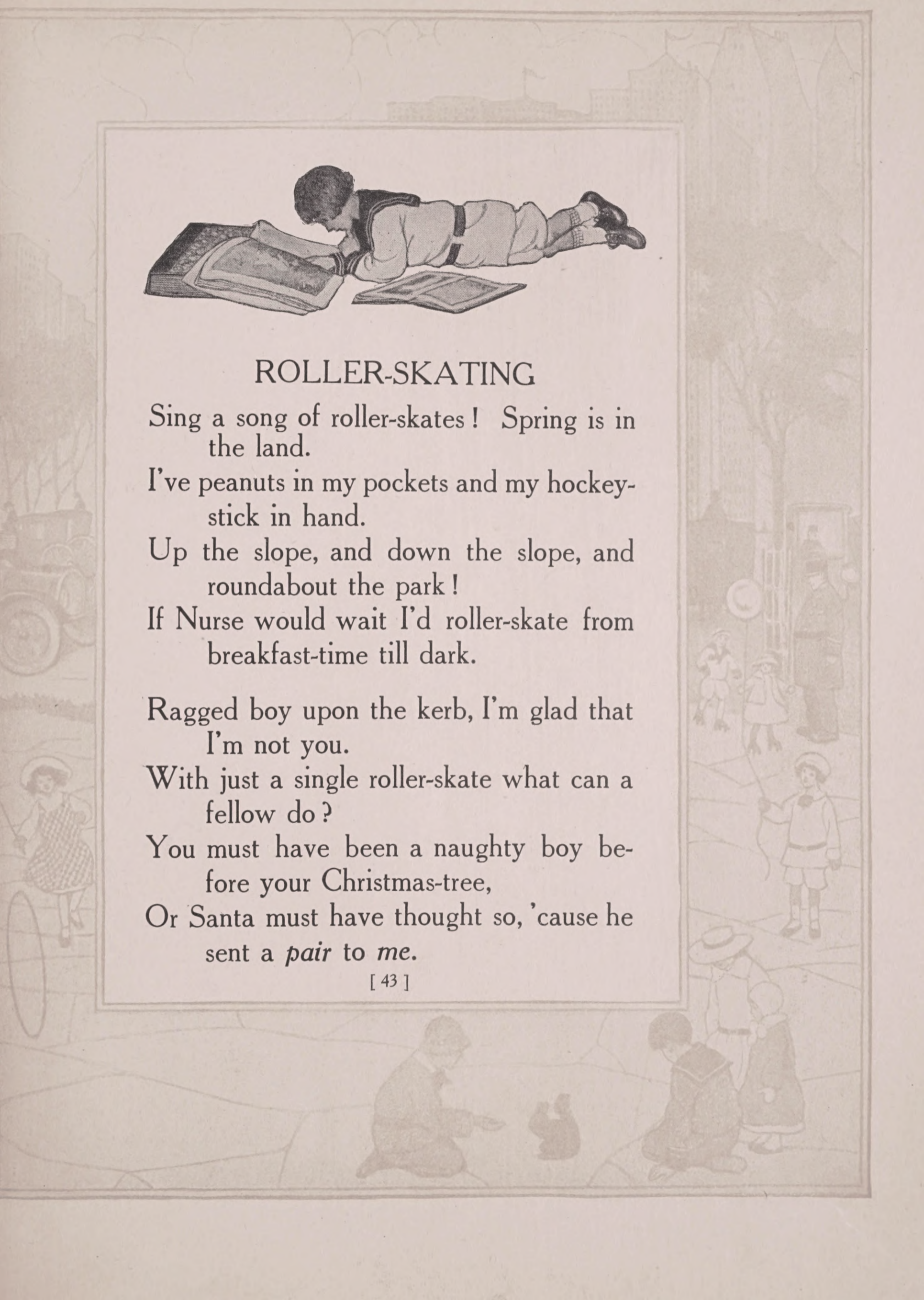
If Nurse would wait I'd roller-skate from  
breakfast-time till dark.

Ragged boy upon the kerb, I'm glad that  
I'm not you.

With just a single roller-skate what can a  
fellow do?

You must have been a naughty boy be-  
fore your Christmas-tree,

Or Santa must have thought so, 'cause he  
sent a *pair* to *me*.



Roller-skating, roller-skating all the after-  
noon!

Time to go? Now, are you sure it's five  
o'clock so soon?

Wheel we home and kick off skates be-  
sides the hall-boy's seat.

Dear, oh dear, I feel so queer—as though  
I'd lost my feet!

Gentlemen drive motor-cars; babies use a  
“pram”;

Trolleys are for working-folk, where they  
squeeze and jam.

Ladies ride a-horseback up and down the  
Mall;

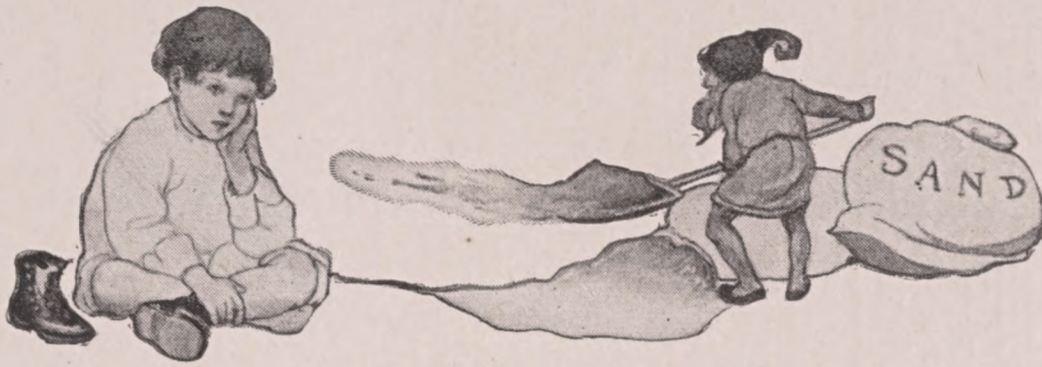
Boys of eight can roller-skate, and that's  
the best of all!





“ Sing a song of roller-skates! Spring is in the land!”





## THE HOMELESS

The country places have no lights  
Nor people on the road, o' nights.  
The world is dark and silent then,  
And we're abed by nine or ten.

But, when in town we came to stay,  
I found it quite the other way ;  
For here, when bedtime's well in sight,  
The crowds come out and walk all night.

I watch them from my window high,  
Both men and ladies thronging by  
With cloaks, and scarves, tall hats and  
canes,  
Afoot, in cabs, in cars and trains.

And I have lain awake to see  
What time their coming home might be,  
But when like lead my eyelids grow  
The crowd's still passing, far below.

Now, if the folks who work all day  
Go home to bed, the proper way,  
Pray who are these in hats so tall  
Who never go to bed at all?

In cities, so I've heard it said,  
Thousands have neither room nor bed.  
Perhaps the crowds I've seen, who roam  
The streets all night, have got no home!








## THE FAIRIES' SWING

Bridge, across the river twisty,  
From our housetop far away,  
When I saw you, faint and misty,  
Like a spider-web of gray—  
Like a loop of cobweb lying  
Far aloft o'er everything—  
Up I jumped and shouted, crying:  
“Look, oh look! The fairies' swing!”  
Yes!—but when they took me to you  
And we walked your length along,  
Bridge, indeed I hardly knew you—  
You're so great and grim and strong,  
Like an outstretched giant, arching  
High above the river's track,  
Crowds and crowds of people marching  
To and fro across your back.





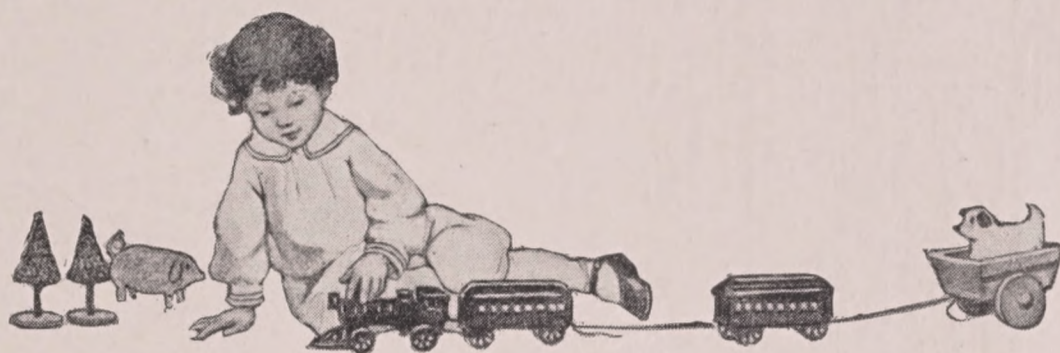
Stacks and masts go slipping under ;  
Tugs and launches, rank on rank ;  
Trucks and trolleys o'er you thunder  
As you bend from bank to bank.

Giant, don't you ever tire,  
Want perhaps to turn or sit ?  
S'pose some day you humped up higher,  
Twisted, yawned and stretched a bit !

What an awful ending to it—  
People tumbling through the air !  
Giant, if you ever do it,  
Do it, please, when *I'm* not there !

Yes, I like you altogether  
'Cause, o'er-arching mast and stack,  
There you lie in every weather  
Bearing crowds upon your back.

Still, I'd rather not be nigh you,  
Great, big, noisy, crowded thing,  
'Cause I *love* you when I spy you  
Far and faint—the fairies' swing.



## THE PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION

I've got a little motor car;  
It's red, and named The King;  
It has a horn, a headlight too;  
It goes likes anything.  
I lean across the steering-wheel  
And pedal with my feet,  
And people turn to stare at me  
As I zip down the street.

Today I saw a ragged boy.  
His motor wasn't real,  
But just an empty drygoods box,  
The hydrant for a wheel.



He sat astride the drygoods box  
And yelled and chooker-chooked.  
He was only *playing* motor-car,  
But oh, what fun it looked!

I'd like to be that ragged boy  
To do whate'er I'd choose:  
To sit astride that drygoods box,  
With neither socks nor shoes;  
To hang upon that hydrant and  
To chooker-chook all day.

• • • • •  
Of course I do not mean I'd give  
My motor-car away!






## VARIOUS CREATURES

To Central Park we journeyed and  
Arrived at where the cages stand ;  
And on the way the squirrels gray  
Took peanuts from my outstretched hand.

The squirrel's eye is brown and bright ;  
He holds a nut as humans might.

He isn't barred in cages hard  
Because his ways are so polite.

The mother-lion that we saw  
Prefers her meat quite red and raw ;  
She licks her young with cat-like tongue  
And sometimes smacks them with her paw.



The monkeys know a thing or two.  
They're such a snatchy, scratchy crew!  
They hang by tail from bar or rail  
And look you sadly through and through.

The polar bear gives swings and shrugs.  
I'm glad I'm not the pole he hugs;  
And, while it's right to be polite,  
He's nicest when he's parlor rugs.

The tall giraffe we eyed and eyed.  
At times he must be sadly tried.  
Why, just to think how long a drink  
Would take to reach his poor inside!

The hippo eats a lot of hay;  
He's bathing in his tub all day.  
His mouth sticks out as in a pout;  
I'd think 'twas rather in the way.

The elephant! His great ears grow  
Like fans—the palm-leaf kind, you know;  
And when he's hot, as like as not,  
He waves them gently to and fro.

The rhino is a great surprise :  
His horn is of tremendous size,  
And from its place upon his face  
You'd think 'twould make him cross his  
eyes.

Now, though my Teddy Bear looks small  
Besides these beasts, so fine and tall,  
He lets me squeeze him when I please  
And shares my tea, and sleeps with me,  
And so I love him best of all !





## THE VERY KIND MAN

We see a man, my nurse and I,  
'Most every day.  
He stands where cars go bumping by  
The criss-cross way.

A big umbrella's open wide  
In case of rain,  
And when it clears, he comes outside  
And stands again.

He offers tickets red and blue  
(Called transfer-slips)  
To gentlemen and ladies who  
Take trolley trips.



I heard my father say one time  
To Auntie Matt,  
Two slips will save ten cents, a dime—  
Just think of that!

Yet no one ever stops to say  
Their thanks or please;  
They catch the car and roll away  
And squeeze and squeeze!

He's very kind, I'm sure, to live  
Out there all day  
Where cars go bumping by, and give  
Those slips away.

And so I think that people might,  
Before they ran,  
Say "please" and "thanks," and be polite  
To that kind man.





## AMBITIONS

If I were a peanut-man, let us suppose,  
I'd feed all the squirrels—a bag for each  
nose—

And eat all I wanted, whenever I chose.

If I were the druggist, just over the way,  
I'd live upon candy and soda all day  
And treat everybody, with nothing to pay.


If I wore a fireman's boots, badge and  
shirt

I'd wade all the puddles and mess in the dirt  
And squirt all the water I wanted to squirt.

If I were the man who straps spikes to his  
feet

I'd shin every telegraph-pole that I'd meet  
And holler at people 'way down in the  
street.





If I were a motorman, just let us say,  
I'd bang on the gong, and I'd zip 'round  
all day

And bump everybody that got in my way.

If I had the street-lamps to turn on, o'  
nights,  
I'd play with the button, and jiggle the  
lights,

And give the policemen some terrible  
frights.

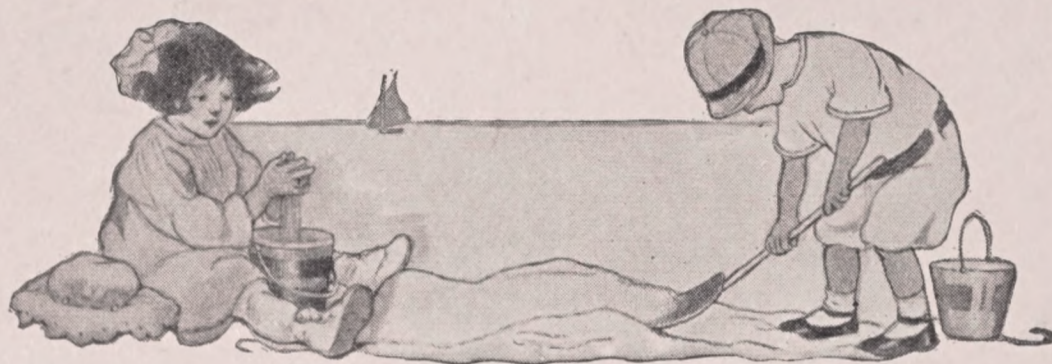
Were I a policeman I'd stay up till ten,  
I'd walk on the grass, I'd be kind to poor  
men,

But I'd scare Mary Jane with my club,  
now and then.

What fun to be *them*, as I'm sure you'll  
agree!

Yet I think, after all, that I'd rather stay  
*me*,

'Cause I wouldn't change mothers with  
anyone—see?



## THE WASTED HOLE

Upon the Square across the way  
They pulled some houses down, one day,  
And then, as miners dig for coal,  
They dug the finest, deepest hole!

So wide, so deep, so full of dirt  
And men in overalls and shirt—  
Of all the streets and buildings too  
It was the nicest place I knew.

Then summer came; we went away;  
I dug with spade and pail all day;  
And when we bade the beach goodbye,  
“I’ll dig that hole at home,” thought I.





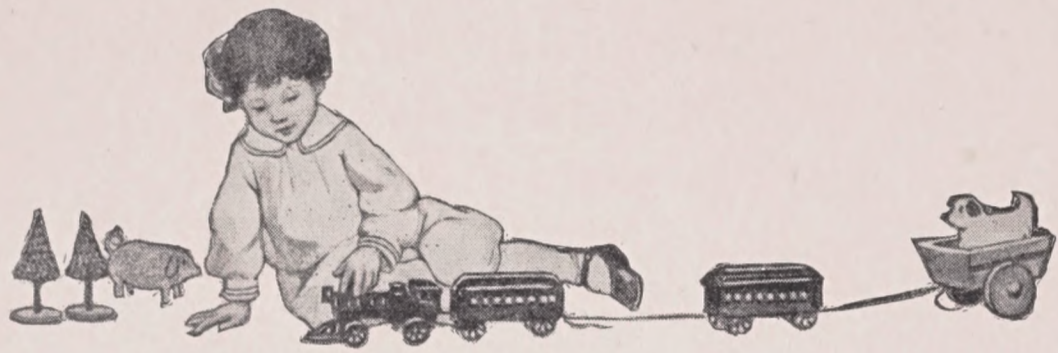
"They'd spoiled that lovely hole"



But, oh, when we had reached the Square  
A great white building towered there!  
I cried, as off to bed I stole,  
Because they'd spoiled that lovely hole.

Such lots of stores and flats, there are,  
Hotels and buildings, near and far;  
Yet someone went and did his best  
To make that place just like the rest!






## THE ELEVATED

Twisty stairs, across the way,  
Rise above the town—  
People climbing up all day,  
People coming down.

Up and up the twisty stair  
Hand in hand we go.  
See the people everywhere  
Swarming far below!

Comes the train with sudden din  
Sliding past our feet.  
Quick, and squeeze our way within  
To a window-seat!





Pretty pictures through the car  
Stretch, a double row;  
Very kind the owners are  
To amuse us so!

Snaking slowly 'round a curve,  
See, the whole long train!  
Now it takes another curve—  
Out of sight again.

Glide we thus o'er street and square,  
Blocks to left and right,  
Sailing onward through the air  
As an airship might.

Doors and windows slipping by,  
Rooms where people sleep,  
Offices in buildings high—  
Into you I peep.

Crowds of folk, whoe'er ye be,  
Far below me, there,  
Don't you wish that you were me,  
Riding in the air?

Down another stair we go  
To the pavement's din,  
Gazing back aloft, for oh,  
See how high we've been!

So much fun you find up there,  
'Tisn't strange, I'd say,  
Crowds should climb the twisty stair  
Up and down, all day.





## THE TIPTOE LADY

She stands upon a building tall  
A-tiptoe on a golden ball.  
She hasn't any clothes at all.

You'll see her far above the Square,  
A golden lady in the air.  
I wonder what it's like up there—

With pigeons floating through the skies,  
And streets and cars so small in size,  
And people swarming by like flies.

She's shooting with a golden bow—  
At least, my father told me so.  
There isn't any arrow, though.

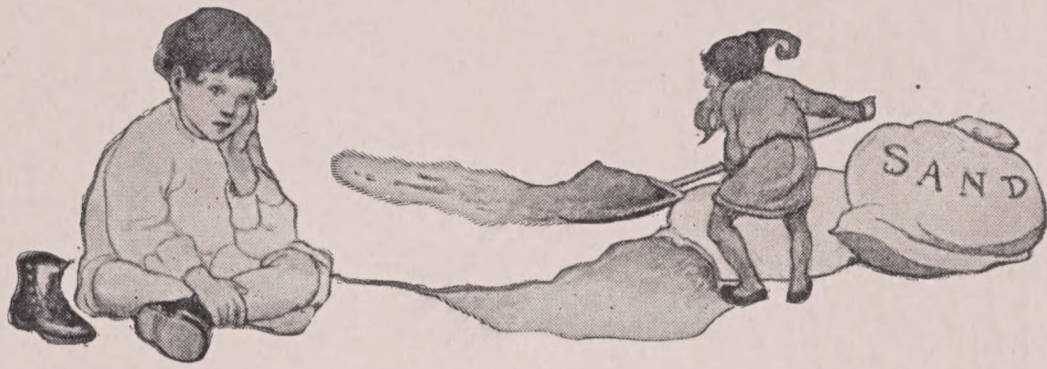


Suppose she tumbled down some day  
As we were passing by, let's say,  
And broke to bits and blocked the way!

Why, if she's gold like mother's rings,  
We'd take some home and live like kings  
And buy a lot of toys and things.

Still, that, I hope, will never be;  
She looks so fine where all can see.  
Besides, she might fall down on *me*!






## THE CHECKER-BOARD HOTEL

Windows, windows, tiny windows,  
Windows all alight,  
Heaping high against the sky,  
A-peering through the night—  
Squares of light and squares of black,  
In one great square as well :  
Yes, every night I watch this sight—  
The Checker-board Hotel!

People, people, crowds of people,  
One to every square,  
As you lay the checkers, say,  
When all the "men" are there.  
Checker-parents, checker-children,  
Clerks and porters, too,  
Stored in Hotel Checker-board,  
I wave goodnight to you.

[ 65 ]





Rooms and rooms in thousands, each  
With bed and pillows neat,  
With slippers placed, and dental paste,  
And nightie, all complete;  
Yet, howsoever late I watch,  
The lights are still a-peep.  
Good checker-men, I wonder when  
You ever go to sleep!

Money, money, heaps of money!  
Father said he found  
It costs you ten whole dollars when  
You're there, to turn around.  
But *why* should you keep turning 'round?  
Just sit aloft, like me,  
And watch, o' nights, the passing sights,  
And save those dollars—see?

Such a lot of checker-folk  
For God to guard at night!  
I wonder if they brushed their teeth  
And said their prayers all right.  
I think I'll add a piece to mine  
(It might be just as well)  
Before I sleep: "God bless and keep  
The Checker-board Hotel!"



## THE ALPHABET OF STREET-SIGHTS

A is for Arc-lamps, in rows through the night.

B is for Bargain-sale. Oh, what a sight!

C's for Conductor. "Step lively!" he cries.

D's for the Docks where the shipping all lies.

E's for Electric—car, taxi or fan.

F is for Floorwalker, *such* a proud man!

G is for Guard on the subway, of course.

H is for Hansom that's pulled by a horse.

I's for Illumined—the signs near and far.

J is for Jam when you squeeze on a car.

K is for "Keep off the grass," in the Square.

L is for L-road that runs in the air.

M is for "Movies"—such pictures and faces!

N's for "No smoking," in various places.

O is for Opera that makes such a noise.

P's for Policeman, who loves little boys.

Q is for Questions he answers all day.

R's for Red-ball. It means skating, they say.

S is for Skyscraper—oh, so immense!

T is for Transfer, which saves you five cents.

U's for Uptown, where we live in a flat.

V is for Vendors of fruit, and all that.

W's for White Wings, who shovel the snow.

As for X, Y, and Z,—why, I'm sure I don't know.





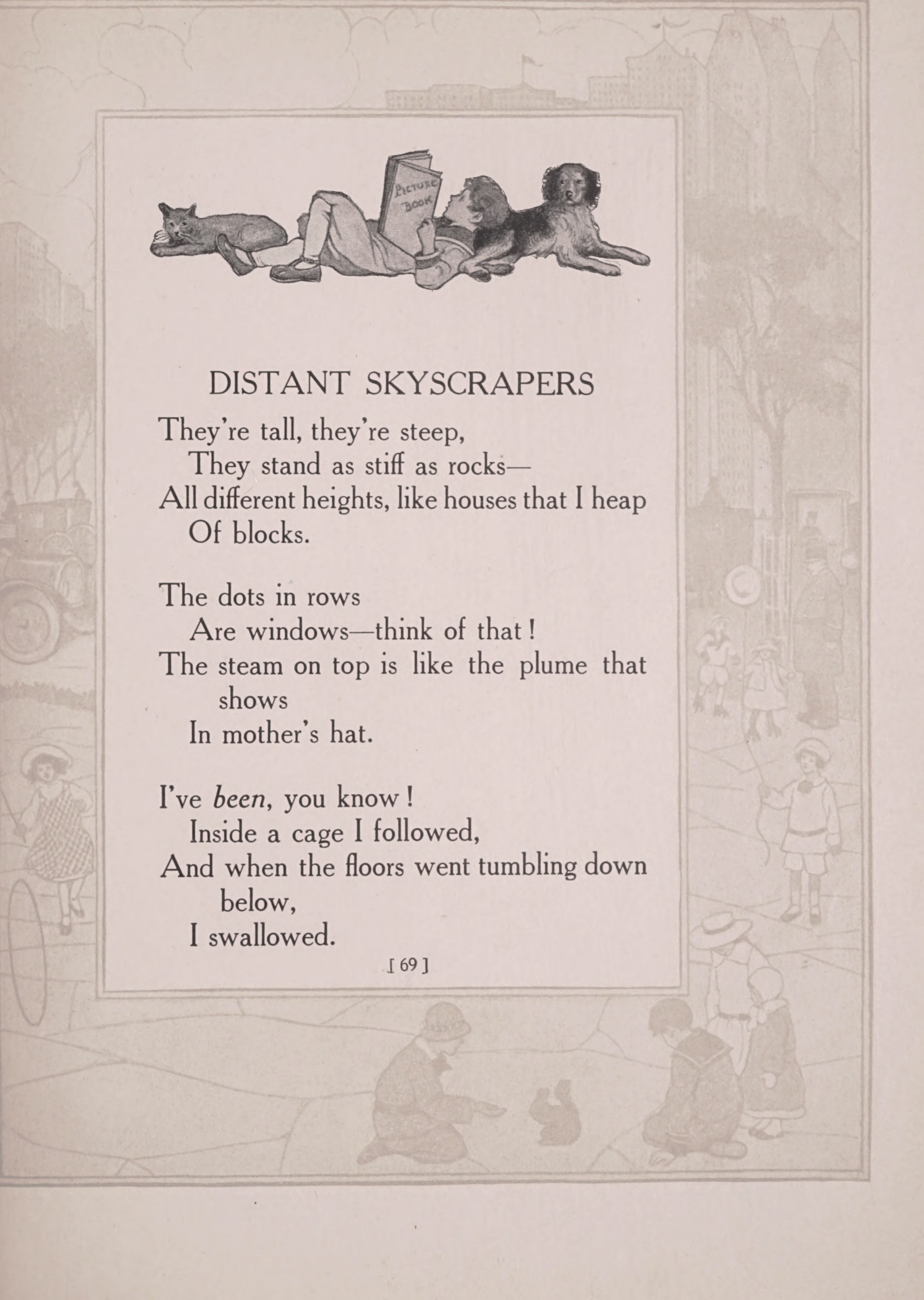


## DISTANT SKYSCRAPERS

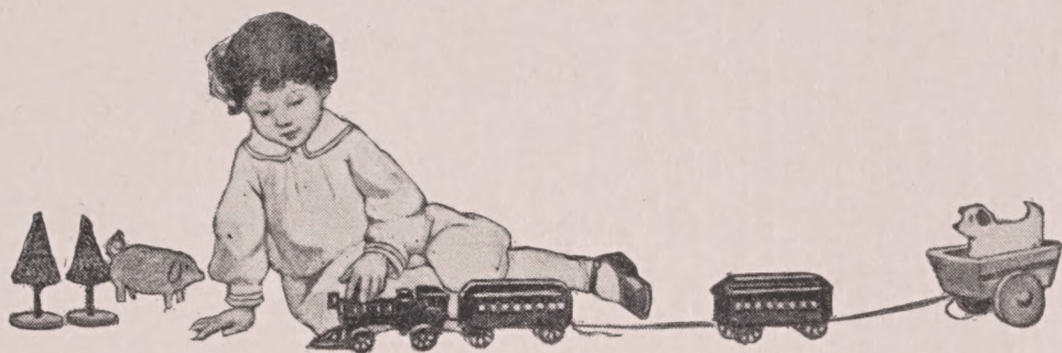
They're tall, they're steep,  
They stand as stiff as rocks—  
All different heights, like houses that I heap  
Of blocks.

The dots in rows  
Are windows—think of that!  
The steam on top is like the plume that  
shows  
In mother's hat.

I've *been*, you know!  
Inside a cage I followed,  
And when the floors went tumbling down  
below,  
I swallowed.







## LETTER-BOXES

Upon our corner lamp-post tall a letter-  
box you'll view.

I used to love that letter-box, so fat and  
green of hue,

Because by it, when walking home, our  
street I always knew.

But once a corner letter-box upon a lamp-  
post tall

I spied, and ran ahead for home, until at  
nurse's call


I found that we were miles away: 'twas  
not our street at all!

And now I'm told that lamp-posts tall  
with letter-boxes green

On almost every corner in the city may  
be seen ;  
And they say it's very useful, but *I* think  
it's very mean.

And I wonder, while out walking, at the  
people that we meet ;  
For city blocks are just alike and lead  
astray your feet.  
With letter-boxes everywhere, how *do*  
they find their street ?



A sepia-toned illustration of a city street scene. The scene is framed by a double-line border. In the background, there are several tall buildings, some with flags on top. In the middle ground, a man in a dark uniform and hat stands on the sidewalk, looking towards the camera. To his left, two children are walking. One child is holding a string attached to a small dog. In the foreground, a young girl in a checkered dress is hula-hooping. To her right, another child is playing with a ball. In the bottom center, a child is kneeling on the ground, looking at a small dog. To the right of the kneeling child, another child is kneeling, and a woman in a long dress and hat is standing nearby. The overall scene depicts a busy city street with children playing and a dog.

IN THE COUNTRY



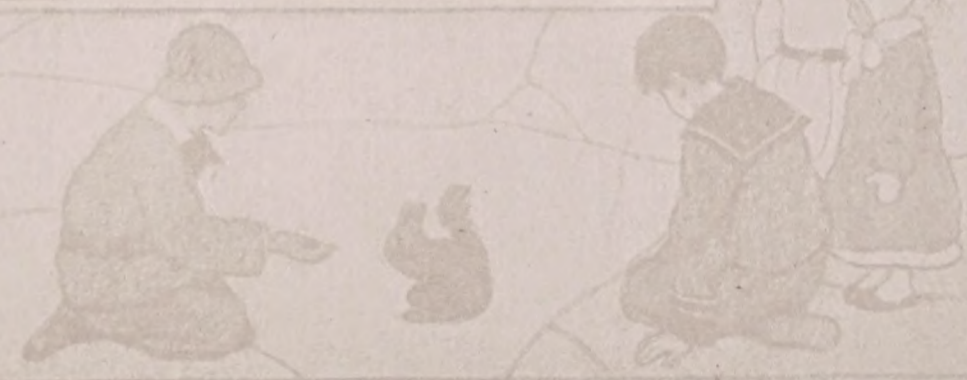


## THE BEHAVIOR OF KITES

The treetops sing, the lilacs sway,  
The clouds skim by like racing sails.  
I've trod the gardener's beds all day  
Through watching kites with swinging  
tails.

The kite, when first you take him out  
Upon the hill where breezes swish,  
Will knock his head and flop about  
And wriggle like a dying fish.

But, give him string, up, up he'll rise  
To soar at ease from place to place,  
A-wobbling down when daylight dies,  
A smile upon his painted face.



If Aunt would only watch the kite,  
Perhaps she'd get to understand  
The reason why I fret and fight  
At being led about by hand.

If she would let me out, instead,  
Across the fields, I'd never fight,  
And end by coming home to bed  
Politely smiling, like the kite.







GEMDUE F. KAY-

“If Aunt would only watch the kite!”





## WHEATFIELD BAY

I climbed the crooked apple tree  
And pushed aside its leaves, and found  
The wheat-field stirring like a sea  
For miles around.

If we could spy some fairy boat  
Moored by the fence in Wheatfield  
Bay,  
We'd set the pretty thing afloat  
And sail away.

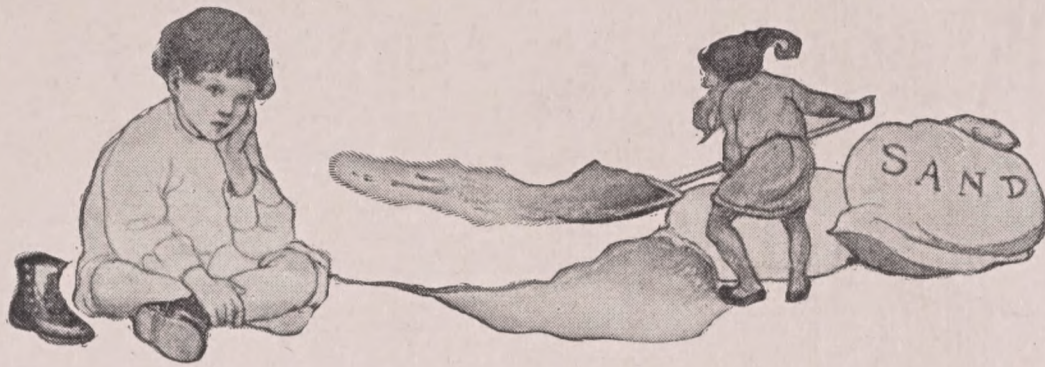
We'd skim the rocking waves, and bear  
Far out beneath blue summer skies  
To skirt the little islands where  
Tall hayricks rise.

All afternoon we'd glide and veer  
And lead the swallows in their race;  
And if it stormed, we'd anchor near  
Some farm-house place

With pigs and dogs and horses, yes,  
And cooing pigeons, soft as silk;  
Also, in case of thirstiness,  
A cow for milk.

Of all the fields, I love this most,  
And then it's useful, too, you see;  
For wheat is bread, and bread is toast  
At night, for tea.





## THE SAND MAN'S BOOK

On rainy Sundays when I look  
For something else to do,  
I get my father's biggest book  
And read the whole thing through.  
I say each *A* without a slip;  
On *I*, I'm never wrong;  
And all the other words I skip—  
They are so very long!

But I must soon begin, they say,  
To sit indoors 'most every day  
And learn to read the grown-up way.

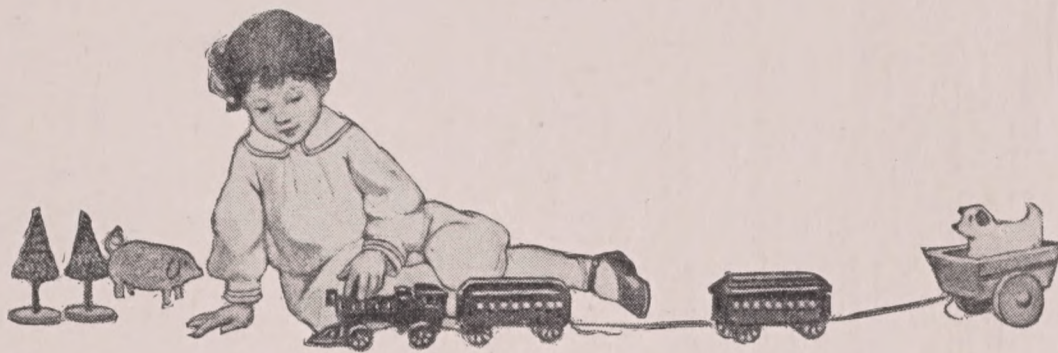
I don't see why, for every night  
His book the Sand Man brings,  
And then I shut my eyelids tight  
And read all sorts of things.



There are no words to set you wrong—  
A picture-book, indeed ;  
He turns the pages all night long,  
And all night long I read.

Now, do you think it fair that they  
Should make me sit indoors each day  
And learn to read the grown-up way ?





## THE PRESIDENTIAL PROBLEM

Said my uncle, as he watched me at my  
play,

“You will surely be the President, some  
day.”

Now, it hasn't happened yet,  
But I'm very much upset  
For fear, when I am older, that it may.

I *will* not be the President! I'll fight!  
If they come for me I'll scurry out of sight.

Yes, I'll get behind the coal  
In the cellar's darkest hole,  
And I won't come out of hiding till it's  
night.

I *will* not be the President they pick!  
If they find me I shall tell 'em that I'm sick;



And if they say, "You must!"  
Then I'll wallow in the dust  
And I'll squirm, and squeal, and butt, and  
bite and kick.

I *will* not be the President! Boo-hoo!  
They will keep me, at the most, a day or  
two;

For at night when they're a-snore  
I'll unlock the kitchen door  
And I'll hurry homeward, mother dear, to  
you.

Though I'd have a lot of fun if I were he,  
They shall never make a President of me;  
For I'm hardly such a dunce  
As to try two things at once—  
And I'm goin' to be a *bootblack*, don't  
you see?







## THE LOST HOUR

I wanted so to march the lane  
With cap, and gun, and sword ;  
But in I went and watched the rain.  
It poured, and poured, and poured.  
The coal-bin's such a friendly place ;  
It's dark, and still, beside ;  
So there I crept and hid my face  
And cried, and cried, and cried.  
I thought of all I might have done,  
The flowers I might have picked ;  
I called the sun a mean old sun  
And kicked, and kicked, and kicked.  
I didn't care for hoops or swings  
Or any toy I owned ;  
I shut my eyes, and hated things,  
And groaned, and groaned, and groaned.

I wished that all the world would stop,  
I wished that I was dead ;  
And when I couldn't cry a drop  
I squealed and squealed, instead.

But when at last I sought the light,  
For fear that nurse would scold,  
I found that all the world was bright  
As gold, as gold, as gold !

The rain had stopped, the worms were out,  
The lilacs swished and swayed ;  
So out I ran, and gave a shout,  
And played, and played, and played.

I wish I hadn't sulked all day  
Behind the cellar bin,  
Because the sun came out, they say,  
As soon as I went in !





## THE DEEP-SEA FISHERS

The good ship *Sofa* heaves and dips amid  
the smaller sails,  
And here with string and crooked pin we  
sit and fish for whales ;  
All day we fish with might and main the  
Parlor Carpet Sea,  
For, oh, our larder's empty, and we *must*  
get food for tea !

What though about our slender craft the  
billows beat and roar ?  
What though great, greedy, green-eyed  
sharks infest the parlor floor ?  
Our relatives depend on us, and tea-time's  
drawing nigh.  
Oh, just suppose, for lack of food, that  
they should up and die !



Then, hungry uncles, starving aunts, and  
famished parents dear,  
Who wait us anxiously ashore, we'll feed  
you, never fear.  
What ho, a bite—a whale at last! Our  
tiny ship careens!  
The household's saved! There's food for  
all—this tin of fine sardines!





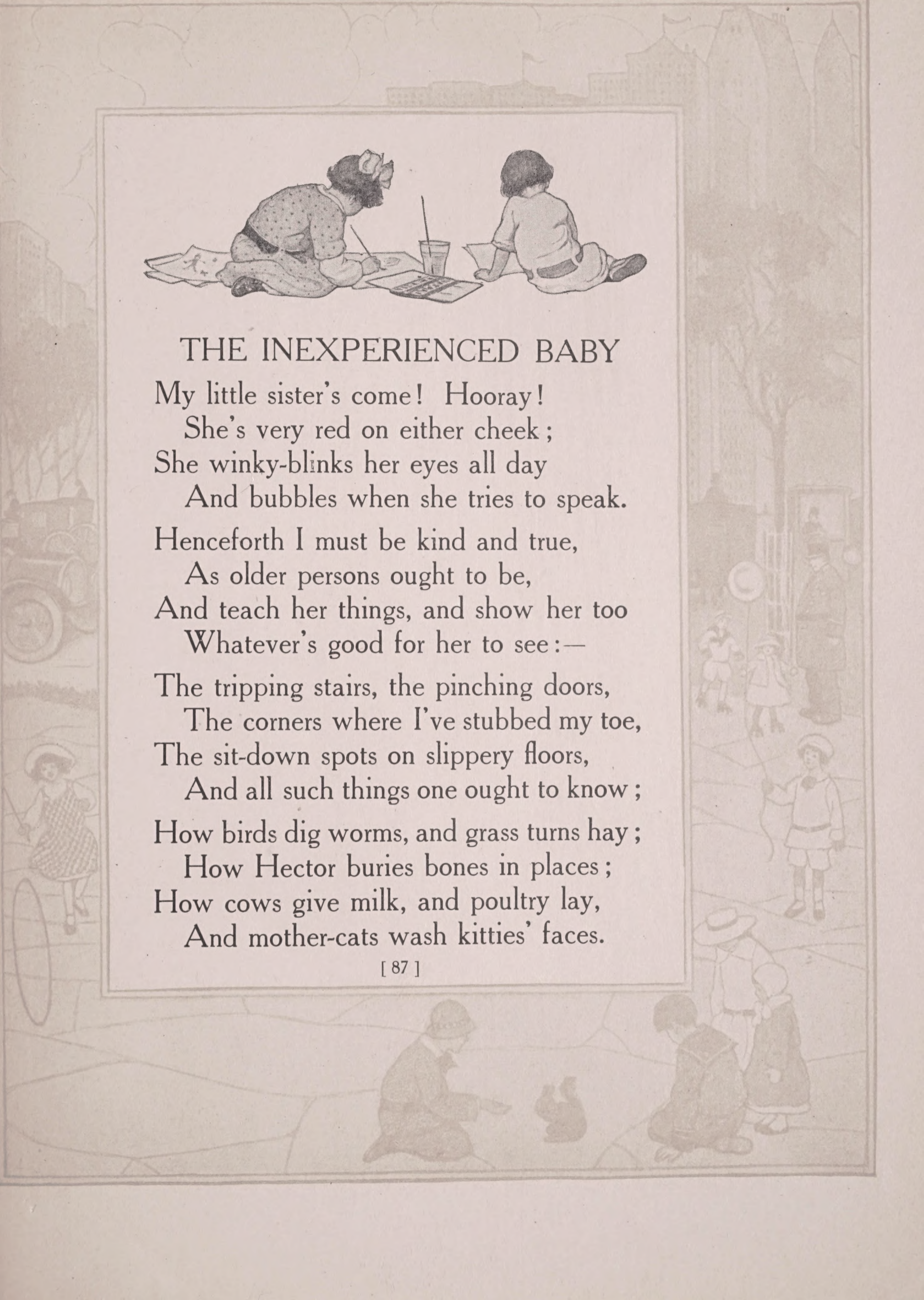
## THE INEXPERIENCED BABY

My little sister's come! Hooray!  
She's very red on either cheek;  
She winky-blinks her eyes all day  
And bubbles when she tries to speak.

Henceforth I must be kind and true,  
As older persons ought to be,  
And teach her things, and show her too  
Whatever's good for her to see:—

The tripping stairs, the pinching doors,  
The corners where I've stubbed my toe,  
The sit-down spots on slippery floors,  
And all such things one ought to know;

How birds dig worms, and grass turns hay;  
How Hector buries bones in places;  
How cows give milk, and poultry lay,  
And mother-cats wash kitties' faces.



Good manners too I'll teach her, and  
Explain what's swallowed *must* be  
chewed ;

How she must cough behind her hand  
And use a push-piece with her food—

And never use a naughty word,  
And always wash inside each ear,  
And often-times be "seen, not heard,"  
And blow her nose so none may hear.

Oh yes, I must be kind and true  
And teach her useful things and such,  
Because she's ignorant and new,  
And I am old, and know so much.





“ . . . . She’s ignorant and new,  
And I am old, and know so much ”







## THE RUNAWAY NAME

Oh, Tom a lazy boy was he!  
(I tell you what was told to me.)  
He wouldn't learn his A-B-C  
And couldn't spell his name.  
Your name's a little elf, or fay,  
That lives beneath your tongue, they say;  
Well, out hopped Tom's and flew away.  
Now, wasn't Tom to blame?

He couldn't either say or sing  
His ownest name—a dreadful thing;  
Besides, it's very sad to bring  
One's dear mamma such grief;  
And when he heard his friends exclaim,  
“There goes the boy without a name!”  
He'd hang his head, while out there came  
His pocket hand-ker-chief.

And so to work he quickly set  
And studied hard the alphabet.  
His name new back ; he's got it yet—  
His tongue will tell you so.  
Perhaps you'll say you cannot see  
How such a thing as this could be ;  
But still, as it was told to me,  
I thought I'd let you know.





## PURRING EXPLAINED

Just put your ear to Flossie's fur  
And listen to her hum and whirr!

Ho, *I* know something *you* don't know!  
What starts and stops a kitty's purr?

My father's watch, a pretty sight,  
Ticks busily all day and night,

Yet when too long it lies alone  
The works run down—it's silent quite.

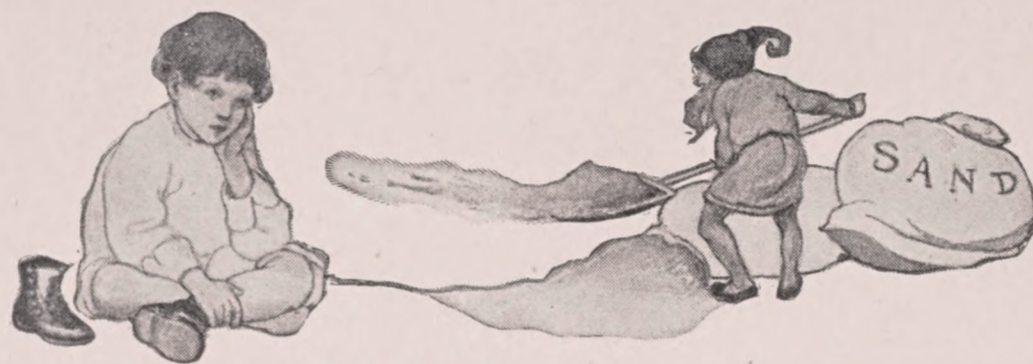
He rocks it back and forth a bit  
And then—unless it's clogged with grit—

Again the ticking sound begins;  
And kitty's just the same as it.

When on the rug I lay her, so,  
She stops; the purr's run down, you know;

And when I rock her back and forth  
Once more her works begin to go.





## ALMOST ASLEEP

Drowsy, clean and warm I feel,  
Smelling all of fresh Castile.

When I squeeze my eyelids tight  
Lots of stars jump into sight.

Mice are nibbling in the dark ;  
Rain is falling. Hear Beau's bark !

Where's the cat I saw to-day  
Stealing tiptoe through the hay ?

Safe, I hope, on rug or mat,  
Dry and sheltered. Good night, cat !

I forgot to pray for Beau.  
God will know I meant to, though.

Mush and milk is good for tea ;  
Soon we'll have some more, maybe.

First, to-morrow, I shall learn  
What's beyond the brown road's turn ;

Then I'll climb the tallest tree  
With nothing 'twixt the sky and me.

I am growing very good,  
Always minding, as I should.

Mother's touch is soft and light  
When she kisses me good night.





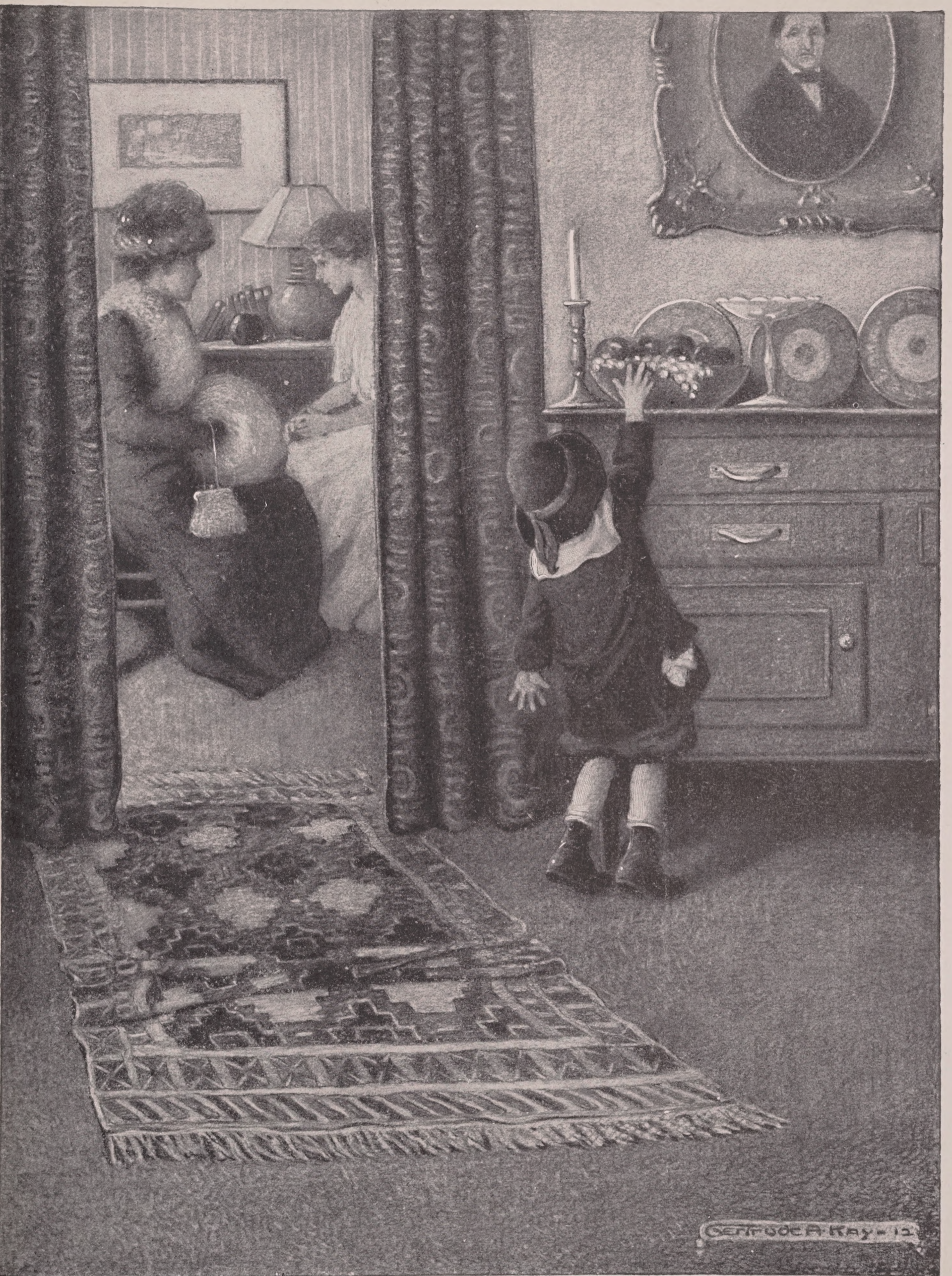
## MAKING CALLS

Good morning, Mister Picture, Sir!  
While mother's making calls on *her*,  
To call on you, I much prefer.

That we are them, suppose we play;  
And I will say what grown-ups say—  
'Twill help to pass the time away.

I'm very glad you were not out.  
Excuse me while I look about.  
(What! Apples? From your tree, no  
doubt!)

And how's the baby? Don't you feel  
Relieved? And did Eliza *steal*?  
(Yes, apples are my favorite meal.)



“An apple? Thanks, I think I will!”





And aren't you glad you changed your  
cook?

And have you read his latest book?  
(How round and red your apples look!)

And how d'you like it in this street?  
And does your butcher sell good meat?  
(Your apples smell so fresh and sweet!)

I wish you'd both come up to dine.  
I like your rug much more than mine.  
(Your apples feel extremely fine!)

I've never seen you in that waist.  
Yes, telephone me—there's no haste.  
(How very good your apples taste!)

Well, we'll be starting up the hill.  
Do drop in soon. We're waiting still.  
(An apple? Thanks, I think I will!)





## THE ALL-WRONG DAY

I must stay in ;  
I've hit my shin ;  
My gun won't shoot, my top won't spin ;  
The rain, they say,  
Has come to stay.  
Oh, everything's gone wrong to-day !

My sword is bent,  
My caps are spent,  
I don't know where my pistol went ;  
I may not beat  
My drum, nor eat  
The cake that burned (my birthday treat) ;

Nor slide the floors,  
Nor play at "stores,"  
Nor wear my rubber boots indoors ;



Nor jounce the cat  
Upon the mat,  
Pretending she's an acrobat.

The maids declare  
I'm like a bear.  
I haven't got the sulks—so there!  
It's just the day  
Gone wrong, *I* say,  
That tries me every kind of way.

I'm certain, though,  
No grown-ups know  
These all-wrong days that vex one so,  
Or else they'd be  
More kind, you see,  
When everything goes wrong with me.






## LEAF-RAKING

The cornstalks lean in pointed sheaves,  
Bare branches sing against the blue;  
The lawn's a sea of withered leaves  
That shizzle as my feet go through.

And Mike ahead and I behind  
Are working hard as hard can be.  
Oh, see them whirling in the wind,  
Just like a waterspout at sea!

And in I dive; I jump and twirl,  
Caught up from earth and floating off;  
And now I plunge where breakers curl,  
Engulfed within the ocean's trough.



I sink, I gasp ; for help I've waved,  
But Michael will not turn his head.  
Lost, lost in Shizzle Sea!—No, saved!  
I'm "rescued"—on the flower-bed!

And now, a mole, I tunnel deep  
Through leafy darkness, on and on.  
Despite all traps, while gardeners sleep  
I'm raising humps across the lawn—

Till, coming up, I face the blue  
That's been aloft this darksome while.  
Just see how straight I've burrowed to  
The center of this 'normous pile!

Here, wrapped in leaves from foot to head,  
Who cares what frost or snow may do?  
I'm Bruin making up his bed  
To sleep the whole long winter through.

At last our leaves are heaped, and show  
Against the dusk in jutting peaks,  
Like Indian wigwams, row on row,  
Whose smoke ascends in coils and  
streaks.

They catch, they blaze! The camp's  
aflame!

And I, the hostile chief, Red Cloud,  
Steal, crawling slyly, on my game,  
To whoop the war-cry long and loud!

Too soon the war-dance ends; too soon  
The blaze is sunk in smouldering gray.  
Up rakes, and homeward by the moon!  
*A fine day's work we've done to-day!*





“And now I plunge where breakers curl,  
Engulfed within the ocean's trough”







## GRACE BEFORE MEAT

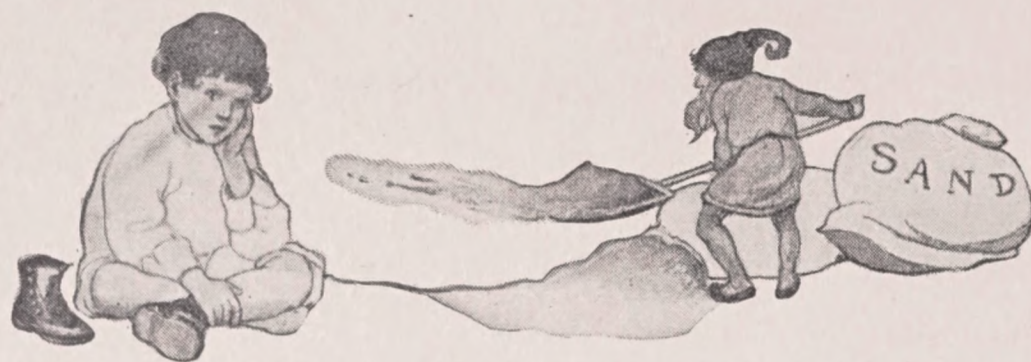
God, who dost the sparrow feed,  
Bless this fare that fills my need.

Like the sparrow with his food,  
May I find Thy bounty good ;

May I, as he chirps with glee,  
Lift this little grace to Thee ;

May we both, when meal-times fall,  
Feel Thy love is over all.





## ACTION BEFORE BATH

Ho, now I'm an Injun! Look out for your  
hair!

My paper-knife scalper I brandish in air;  
I'm dancing in circles, I'm shrieking with  
glee,

And I'm just as naked as naked can be.

And now I'm a boxer stripped bare for  
the fray.

A shower of blows, and I'm off and away,  
On guard with my fists and half-crook'd  
at the knee,

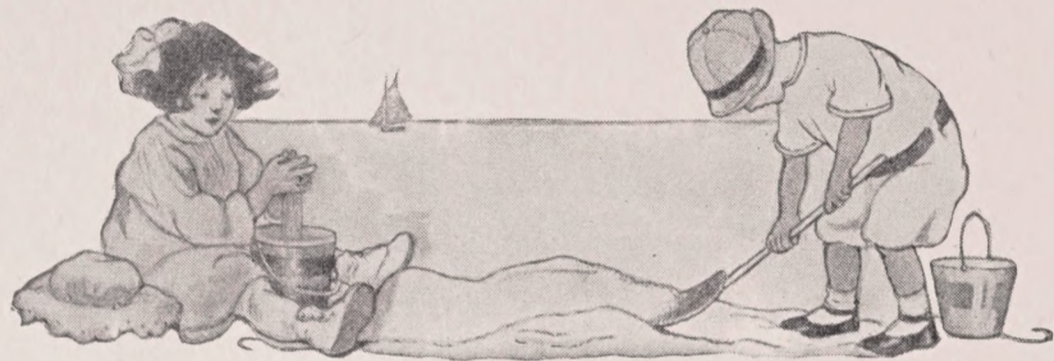
And I'm just as naked as naked can be.

And now I'm a grizzly, all-fours on the  
rug.

Be warned by my growling, beware of  
my hug!

Cooks, nurses and housemaids could never  
tame *me*,  
And I'm just as naked as naked can be.  
Slam-bang with the towels, the soap and  
the sponge!  
I kick and I paddle, I splash and I plunge;  
I'm a shark, I'm a whale, I'm a big man-  
atee,  
And I'm naked as naked as naked can be.  
Skirts, pants and pajamas are useful, no  
doubt,  
And you *must* wear your kilts when  
there's callers about;  
But just before bath-time, I'm sure you'll  
agree,  
It's fine to run naked as naked can be.





## A PRECAUTION

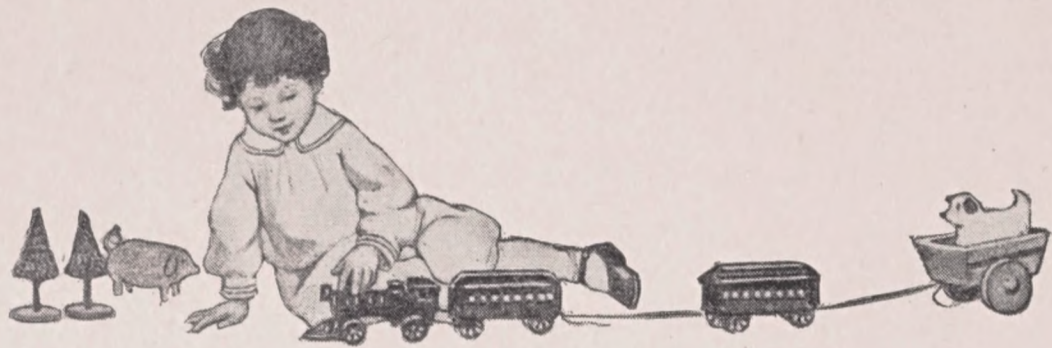
We took the boat to Silver Beach,  
And on the way I ate a peach ;  
And when I'd sucked the peach-stone dry  
I kept it. Do you wonder why ?

The paddles, churning in the sun,  
Made suds, like washing being done.  
When we had come to land at last  
My hand still held that peach-stone fast.

But just before we went to wade  
I took my bucket and my spade  
And knelt upon the beach alone  
And dug a hole, and hid that stone.

Suppose I'd thrown it overboard  
And waded on it afterward?  
It might have made my ankle bleed  
And hurt me very much indeed.





## A DASH FOR THE POLE

The wondrous thing befell last night  
As I lay sleeping.  
To-day the world lies brilliant-white  
With snowdrifts heaping ;

No tiniest track on lawn or stoop—  
Man's, dog's, nor kitten's.  
Along our drive the pine-trees droop  
Fat, snowy mittens.

What ho! My boots, toboggan cap  
And gauntlets, Norah!  
Goes hence, yon Arctic shores to map,  
The young explorer.

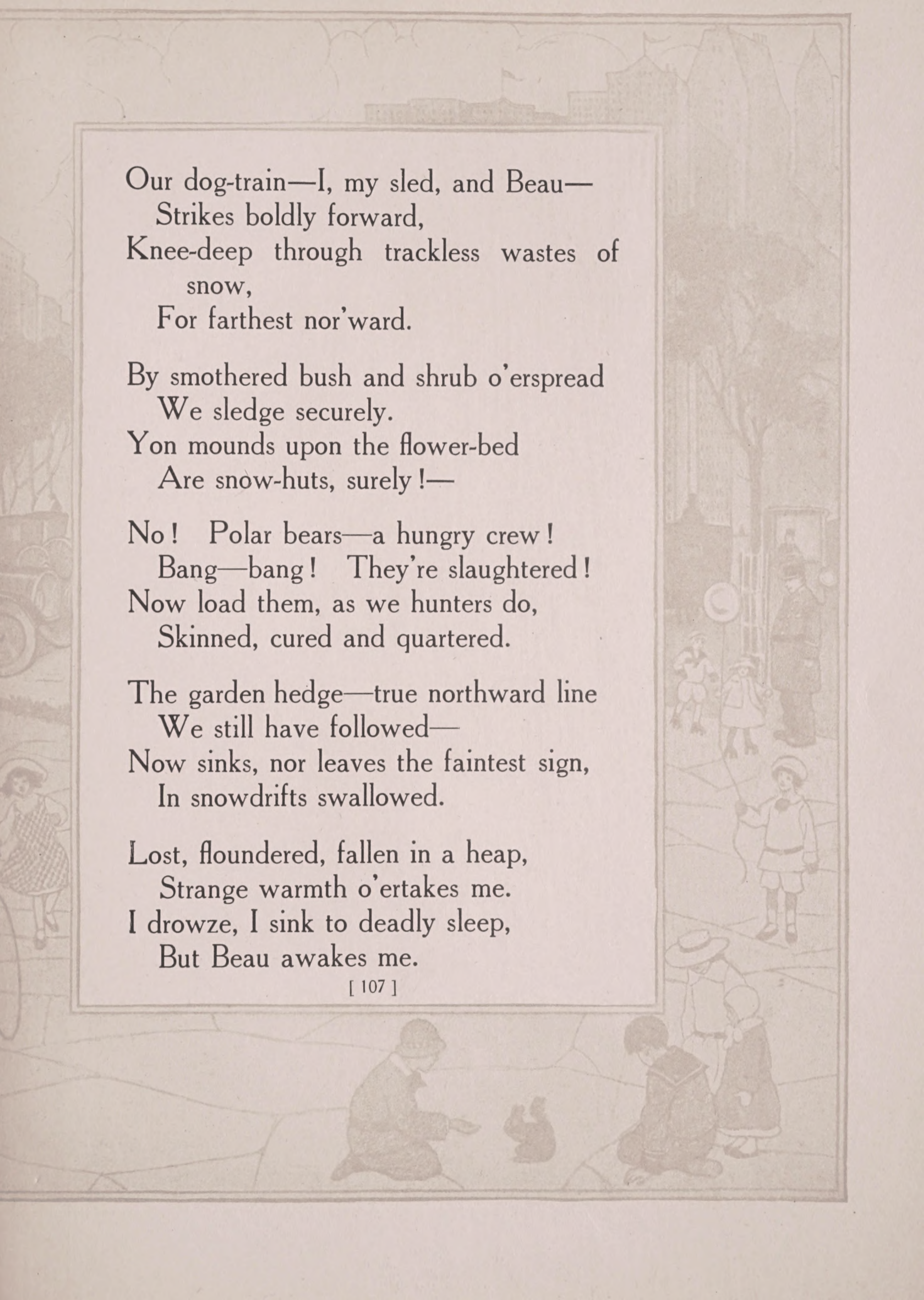
Our dog-train—I, my sled, and Beau—  
Strikes boldly forward,  
Knee-deep through trackless wastes of  
snow,  
For farthest nor'ward.

By smothered bush and shrub o'erspread  
We sledge securely.  
Yon mounds upon the flower-bed  
Are snow-huts, surely!—

No! Polar bears—a hungry crew!  
Bang—bang! They're slaughtered!  
Now load them, as we hunters do,  
Skinned, cured and quartered.

The garden hedge—true northward line  
We still have followed—  
Now sinks, nor leaves the faintest sign,  
In snowdrifts swallowed.

Lost, floundered, fallen in a heap,  
Strange warmth o'ertakes me.  
I drowze, I sink to deadly sleep,  
But Beau awakes me.



On, on afresh, each muscle strained  
Toward certain glory!  
At last our winter camp is gained!  
(The conservatory.)

Starvation threatens—awful dread  
Wherewith to grapple!  
No—saved! See, hanging overhead,  
A winter-apple!

Ha, lonely clothes-post looming nigh,  
Askew and cranky!  
Won is the pole—wherewith shall fly  
Our proud clean hanky!

Now Southward Ho! We're home once  
more.

Cross, Norah's look is  
At worms of water on the floor—  
Our prize, three cookies.



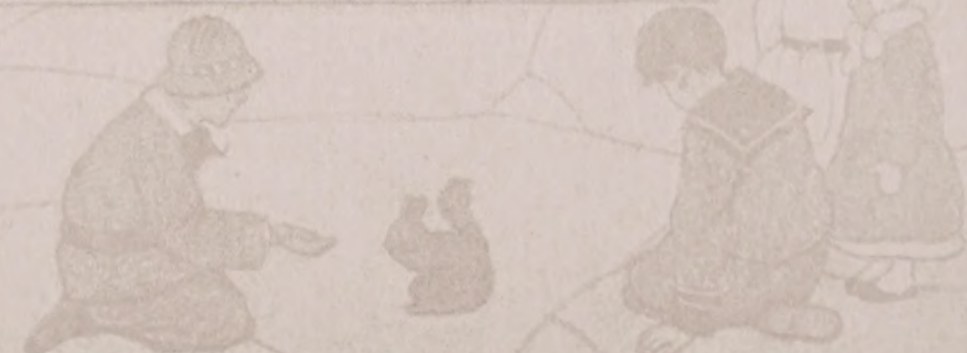




## THE FROST FAIRIES

On frosty eves when crickets cheep,  
Their watch the winter fairies keep,  
And by the light  
Of moonbeams white  
Weave silver laces while I sleep.

Yes, when the daylight comes again  
I find they've worked with might and  
main ;  
For frills and stars  
And crinkly bars  
Make curtains on my window-pane.



The wintry sun, uprising red,  
Must think that I'm a sleepy-head:  
He melts away  
The curtains gay,  
For fear I'd lie all day in bed.





“ . . . . weave silver laces while I sleep ”





## BEAUTIFUL BREAKFAST

Oh dear, I love my breakfast so!  
I wonder what I'd do without it!  
And often, as to sleep I go,  
I think about it.

When things look dark on every hand  
And I feel lonely and forsaken,  
I think about next morning and  
My egg and bacon.

Oh yes! And I have wondered some  
At breakfast-time, about my betters,  
Who always seem so cross and glum  
And eat while reading stupid letters.

[ 111 ]



For, while I do enjoy my tea  
And luncheon, too, beyond all doubting,  
Whenever breakfast's brought to me  
*I* feel like shouting!





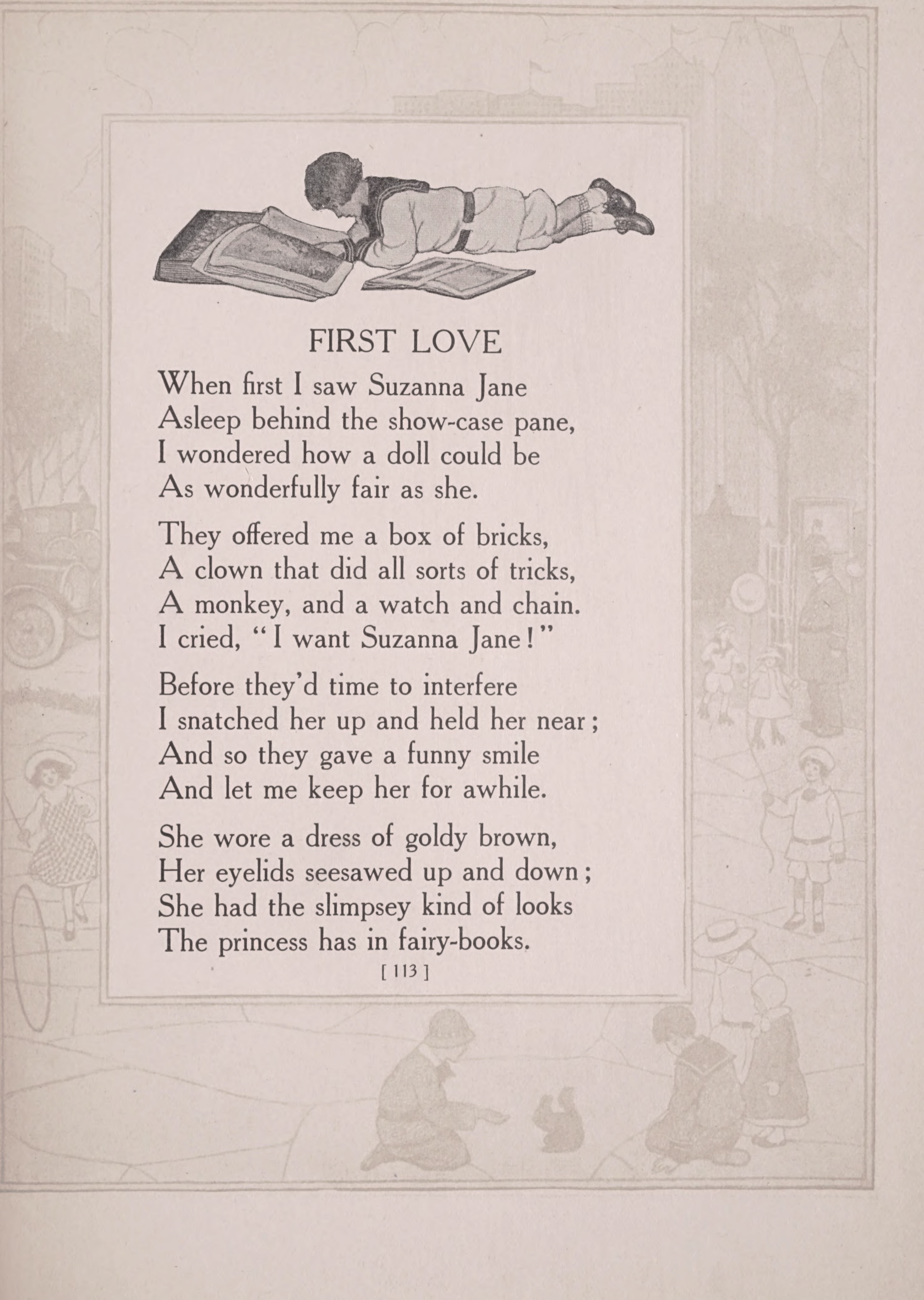
## FIRST LOVE

When first I saw Suzanna Jane  
Asleep behind the show-case pane,  
I wondered how a doll could be  
As wonderfully fair as she.

They offered me a box of bricks,  
A clown that did all sorts of tricks,  
A monkey, and a watch and chain.  
I cried, "I want Suzanna Jane!"

Before they'd time to interfere  
I snatched her up and held her near;  
And so they gave a funny smile  
And let me keep her for awhile.

She wore a dress of goldy brown,  
Her eyelids seesawed up and down;  
She had the slimpsey kind of looks  
The princess has in fairy-books.



But lady-dolls aren't meant for boys,  
Who ought to play with manlier toys;  
So once, when I was at my tea,  
They hid Suzanna Jane from me.

I searched for her the livelong day.  
They only said, "She's gone away"—  
Which sounded rather strange, you know,  
Because we loved each other so.


I wouldn't play with balls or kites;  
I lay awake for nights and nights  
And in the darkness sobbed and tossed,  
For oh, Suzanna Jane was lost!

And now, when I am eight to-day  
(And growing tall, I hear them say),  
With things like older fellows show—  
Real tools that cut and trains that go—

And roller-skates and water-wings  
And lots of other grown-up things—  
High on a shelf I've often passed  
I find Suzanna Jane at last!







She doesn't look the same to me.  
(I used to think her *real*, you see.)  
Her nose is chipped, she's lost some hair;  
Her feet are plaster, I declare!

Her lids no longer lift and fall;  
She will not look at me at all;  
And when the speaking-place I squeeze  
"Ma-ma, Ma-ma!" is all she'll wheeze.

Oh, long, Suzanna, for your sake  
I wept as if my heart would break.  
I searched and searched—you know I did—  
But still you hid, and hid, and hid.

Well, now I'm old, and taller, too,  
With lots of grown-up things to do.  
And yet I hate to say goodbye . . .  
I'm eight to-day, and mustn't cry!

Perhaps if I should put you back  
Aloft within your closet black,  
Some day I'll find you as before,  
All wonderful and real, once more.

Ho! Now I'm off to play with boys  
And make all sorts of fun and noise!

.....  
I hope that no one saw me when  
I kissed Suzanna Jane, just then!





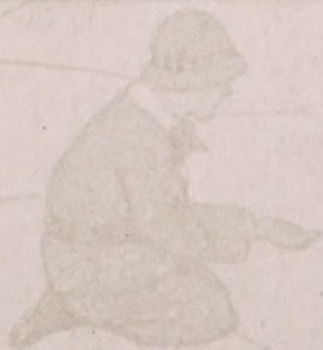
## THE IMPOLITE FLY

When Mary sweeps the table scraps  
She hates him buzzing 'round ;  
He breaks my uncle's evening naps  
Till Uncle says, " Confound ! "

And horses, when he 'lights, begin  
To stamp their feet and shrug their  
skin.

He walks the pictures, chairs and lamps,  
He lights on hand or shoe ;  
He tries the taste of postage stamps,  
Of evening papers, too ;  
And when I take a picture book  
He thinks it's smart to come and look.

I'm sure he has no little wife,  
Nor children, nor a home.  
It seems a very happy life  
To skip and buzz and roam ;



Yet no one wants to let him live  
Because he's so inquisitive.

So up we jump, enraged at last,  
And chase him everywhere ;  
But when you think you've got him fast  
He's circling through the air ;  
And Auntie beats the window-  
screen,  
And Uncle slaps the place he's been.

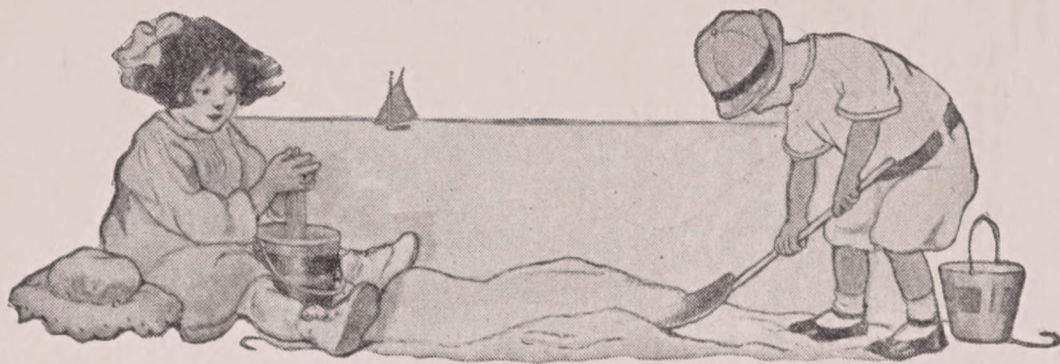
In fact, he's so afraid of all,  
When bed-time draws anigh  
He's perched far up upon the wall,  
Or else the ceiling high ;  
And there he has to sleep all night  
Turned upside down. It serves him  
right.





“He’s circling through the air”





## A POPULAR SUPERSTITION

In summer-time, I've heard them say,  
Comes, every year, the longest day ;  
And when the snow and ice appear  
The shortest day is always near.

Yet any child can see at once,  
Unless he calls himself a dunce,  
That long and short, without a doubt,  
Are just the other way about.

For when there's birds and cows and toads,  
And bubbly brooks, and friendly roads,  
Such lots to do, such heaps to see  
Between your breakfast-time and tea ;



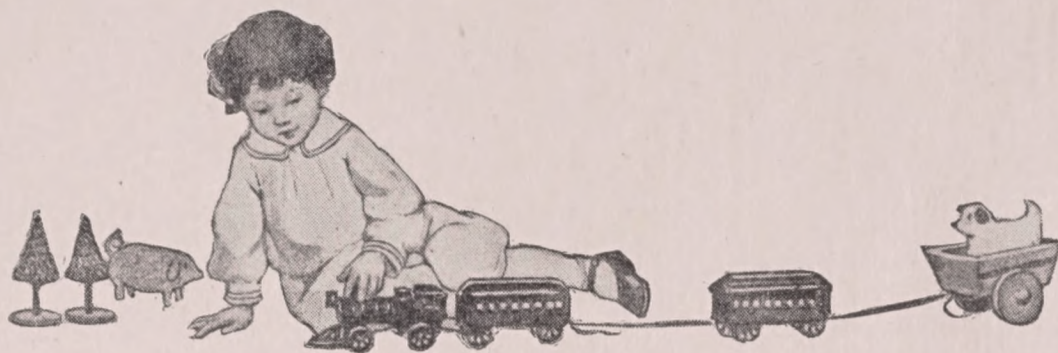
When trees against the sunset-flames  
Begin their shadow-dancing games  
And you are called to leave your play  
In summer—that's the *shortest* day!

But when the snow is deep without  
And icebergs glue the water-spout;  
When parcels come from everywhere,  
And you must neither touch nor stare;

When all your toys look old and queer  
Because to-morrow's almost here,  
With p'raps a rocking-horse, we'll say,  
For Christmas—that's the *longest* day!







## THE CHRIST-CHILD'S CANDLES

The lamp, the gas, the 'lectric light  
Were made for picture-books at night.  
The candle, different by far,  
Was made to show how old you are.

For on all birthday-cakes appear  
Red candles, one for every year;  
And when they die, in case of doubt,  
You count them as you blow them out.

And so upon the Christmas tree  
The Christ-child's candles you will see.  
A tree with toys for children's sake  
He has instead of birthday-cake;



And there a world of candles glow—  
The Christ-child lived so long ago;  
Yet no one counts them up, since He  
A little child will always be.





## SOMETIMES LONELY

When the blinds are drawn and the tea-  
things done

And the firelight-dance begins,  
And it seems so hard to be born just *one*,  
I make up a game called "Twins."

Yes, I see you smile through the  
flames at play,  
Little friend Someone, far away.

And from over the ridge of the purple  
hills

As I sit, some nights, at tea,  
The distant note of a bugle shrills,  
And I think it's your call to me ;  
So I wave at the west, as if to say  
"Goodnight, little Someone, far  
away !"

There's ever so much that I'd like to  
know :

If *you* hate long Sundays, too ;  
If you've a rake, a spade and a hoe—  
'Cause I'd lend mine all to you ;  
What cake you like and what games  
you play,  
Little friend Someone, far away.

*You're* lonely, too. (Oh, you must be  
that,

Or it wouldn't be fun, or fair !)  
And I play that *your* nurse is cross and  
fat,  
And you hate her to brush your hair.  
And please love fairies and caves  
and hay,  
Little friend Someone, far away !

Some day when it's blowy and bright  
and blue

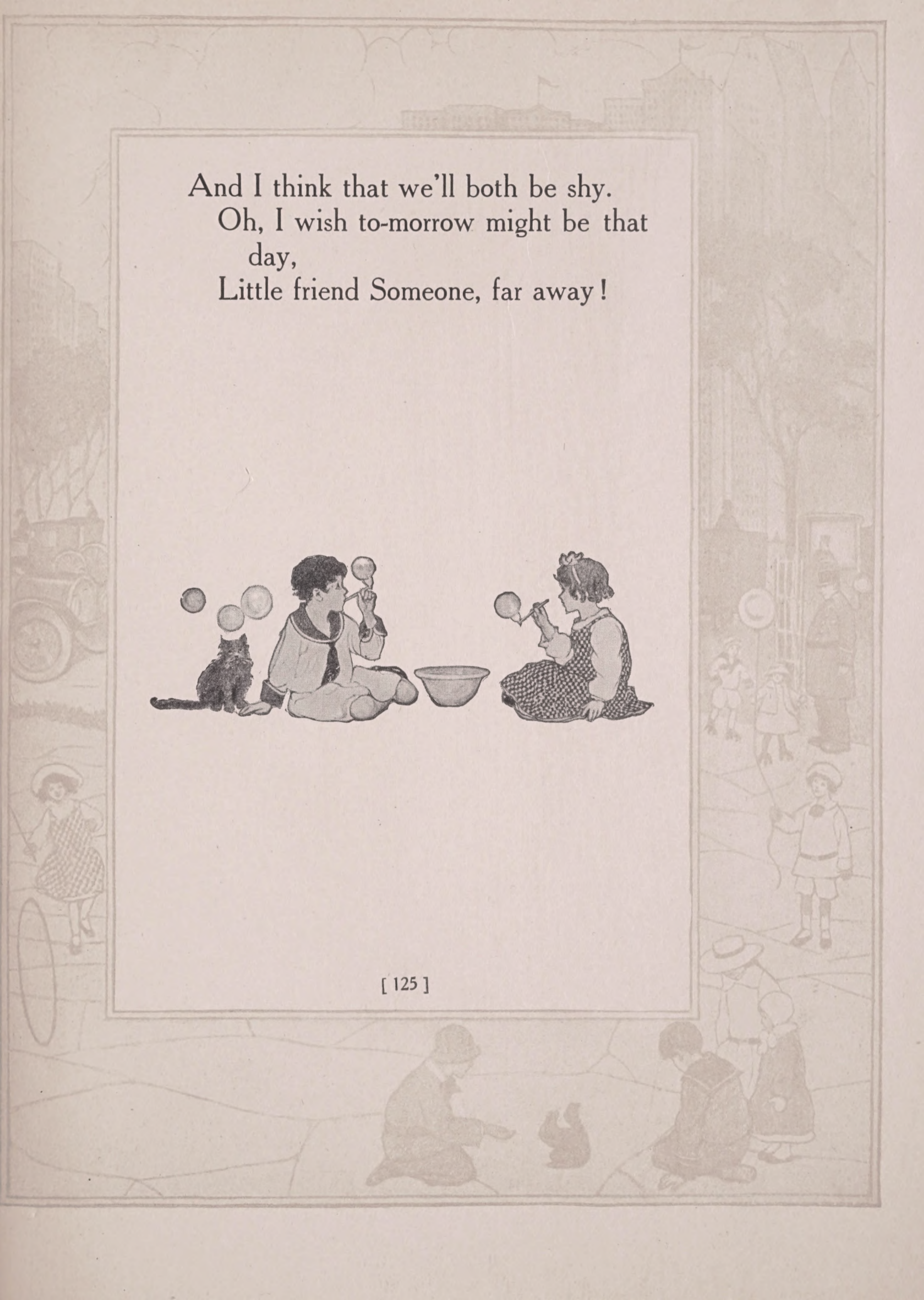
I'm sure you'll come walking by.  
You'll know I'm *I*, and I'll know you're  
*you*,



“Yes, I see you smile through the flames at play,  
Little friend, Some one, far away”



And I think that we'll both be shy.  
Oh, I wish to-morrow might be that  
day,  
Little friend Someone, far away!





## BELIEF IN FAIRIES


I've searched as hard as searcher can,  
Since yesterday, for Peter Pan  
Through orchard, lawn and woodland dim;  
I've even called aloud to him  
By hayloft, brook and garden-plot,  
To come and play—but he will *not*!

I've tried to teach our dog since noon  
To carry doses in a spoon,  
Snap on and off the 'lectric light  
And fold my bedclothes down, for night;  
To turn my bath on, steaming hot,  
As Nana did—but Beau will *not*!

I've tried to shake my shadow free,  
But still it always sticks to me.







Oh, how I'd love to find it gone,  
To rescue it, and sew it on  
With Wendy's help, upon the spot,  
As Peter did—but I can *not*!

I've tried to fly from bed to bed,  
But only jump, and fall, instead,  
While there's the window waiting wide,  
Could I but rise and float outside  
Off, off with Peter, like a shot.  
The Darlings did,—but I can *not*!

When on the floor a sunbeam fell  
I played 'twas fairy Tinker Bell;  
But though I called and danced around  
It lay quite still, nor made a sound.  
Now, Tinker flashed from spot to spot  
With jingling talk—but it would *not*!

I've also played our colored cook  
Was horrid, hidjous Captain Hook;  
Our clock—to scare the pirates vile—  
The awful Ticking Crocodile;  
The lilac bush, my Treetop Cot.  
I play they're real,—but oh, they're *not*!

“Believe in fairies?” Now confess,  
I jumped and waved and shouted “YES!”  
So, Peter, kindly prove I’m right  
By flying to my room to-night,  
To teach me all the tricks you’ve got—  
Or I’ll begin to think I’m *not*!






## THE CITY OF HIDE AND SEEK

I hid my eyes and counted fair  
Beside the big gray stone,  
Then hunted for them everywhere,  
But I'd been left alone ;  
And though perhaps I *am* "too small,"  
It's late, and lonely, too ;  
And *she* ran off, just like them all,  
And I'd cry, if no one knew.

Yet I seek and seek while the day-  
light wears,  
But nobody answers and nobody cares  
That I'm playing at hide-and-seek.

[ 129 ]





Oh, Cloudland's heaped with peak and  
dome

Ablaze by Sunset Sea!

It always seems to whisper: "Come!  
Into the west, to me!"

Its gateways open on the deep  
Where float the Rose-pink Isles,  
And all its children wake from sleep  
When the big white star first smiles.

You may seek and seek in the maps  
and books,

But *I* know its name from the way  
it looks:

It's the City of Hide and Seek.

Its houses are of sunset rays,


Its streets of rainbow gold—

A criss-cross, tangled, red-roofed maze,  
As old, as old, as old!

Such twists and turns! Such hiding-nooks!

Yet all the while you know

What's coming next—as in fairy-books  
Read to you, long ago.



And you seek and seek, but you  
must be quick,  
For the light dies soon, like a burned-  
out wick,  
In the City of Hide and Seek.

And there you find them, fresh and gay,  
The toys you've wanted back,  
The ones you broke or threw away  
Because of scratch or crack.  
And there the children aren't unkind;  
You're not "too small" to play;  
And there *she'd* always stay behind  
When the others ran away.

And you seek and seek till you hear  
the shout  
Of "All in home!" and the lights  
go out  
In the City of Hide and Seek.

My city's crumbling! Black and cold,  
It's sunk in Sunset Sea.  
How dark and still! (At home they'll  
scold.)

Ugh! What's beside that tree?  
What! *You*? You've watched my city,  
too,  
Hid by the broken wall?  
You stayed behind? Oh, I'm glad it's you,  
'Cause I like you best of all!

Is the city, itself, just hid, you'd say?  
If we seek and seek can we find the  
way?

What fun if we met somehow some  
day  
In the City of Hide and Seek!





## SECRET LANGUAGES

Last night I dreamed a tiny elf  
Popped up beside my bed,  
And when he'd introduced himself  
Three funny words he said ;  
And back and forward through my head  
The words have danced all day :—  
Kiggetty, Quobbitty, Gubbitty—  
Isn't it fine to say ?  
Kiggetty, Quobbitty, Gubbitty—Oh!  
*Isn't it fine to say ?*

The Indians and Eskimos,  
The Turks and Japanese  
Have words a-plenty, I suppose,  
That mean the same as these ;  
But here's a language, if you please,



Meant just for me and you :  
Kiggetty, Quobbitty, Gubbitty—  
Isn't it nice and new ?  
Kiggetty, Quobbitty, Gubbitty—Oh!  
*Isn't it nice and new ?*

Let's practice up a little while,  
Then say it everywhere ;  
And how we'll wink, and nudge, and smile  
When people turn to stare !  
So can you keep a secret ? There !  
Come close—I'll tell you true :  
Kiggetty, Quobbitty, Gubbitty—  
Yes indeed I do !  
(Kiggetty, Quobbitty, Gubbitty means  
*I—love—you !*)

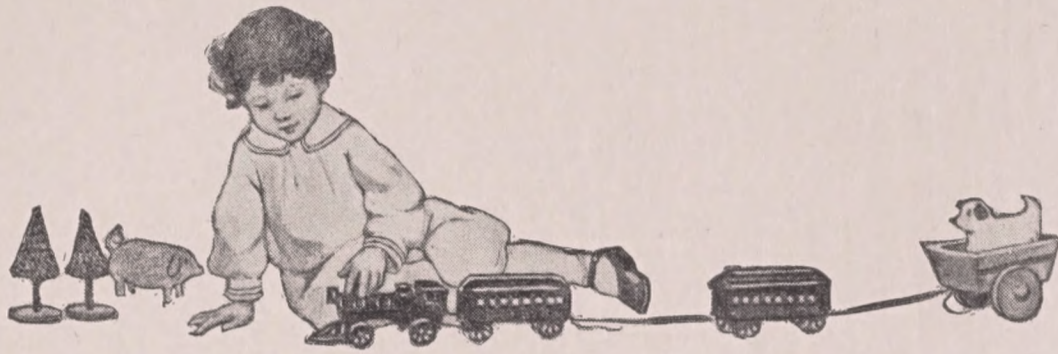






“Kiggetty, Quobbitty, Gubbitty means  
I—love—you!”





## TREETOP ROMANCE

Ho! all aboard the Treetop Ship!

Aloft the summer breeze is wailing;  
Our anchor's up, our hawsers slip,  
And 'round the world we're smoothly  
sailing.

Goodbye, old house, old garden, too,  
With Sarah's Monday wash a-drying!  
I'm lookout-man amid the blue,  
And overhead the clouds are flying.

Our gravel walks, so flat and neat,  
Like slender brooks seem half in motion.  
Hurrah! There's China at our feet,  
And yonder the Atlantic Ocean!

Ho! Reef our sails, you men behind!  
We're far upon the angry billows—  
No sound except the singing wind  
And Martin beating rugs and pillows.

Avast! A whale upon our right!  
Look sharp, my boys—harpoons and  
tackle!

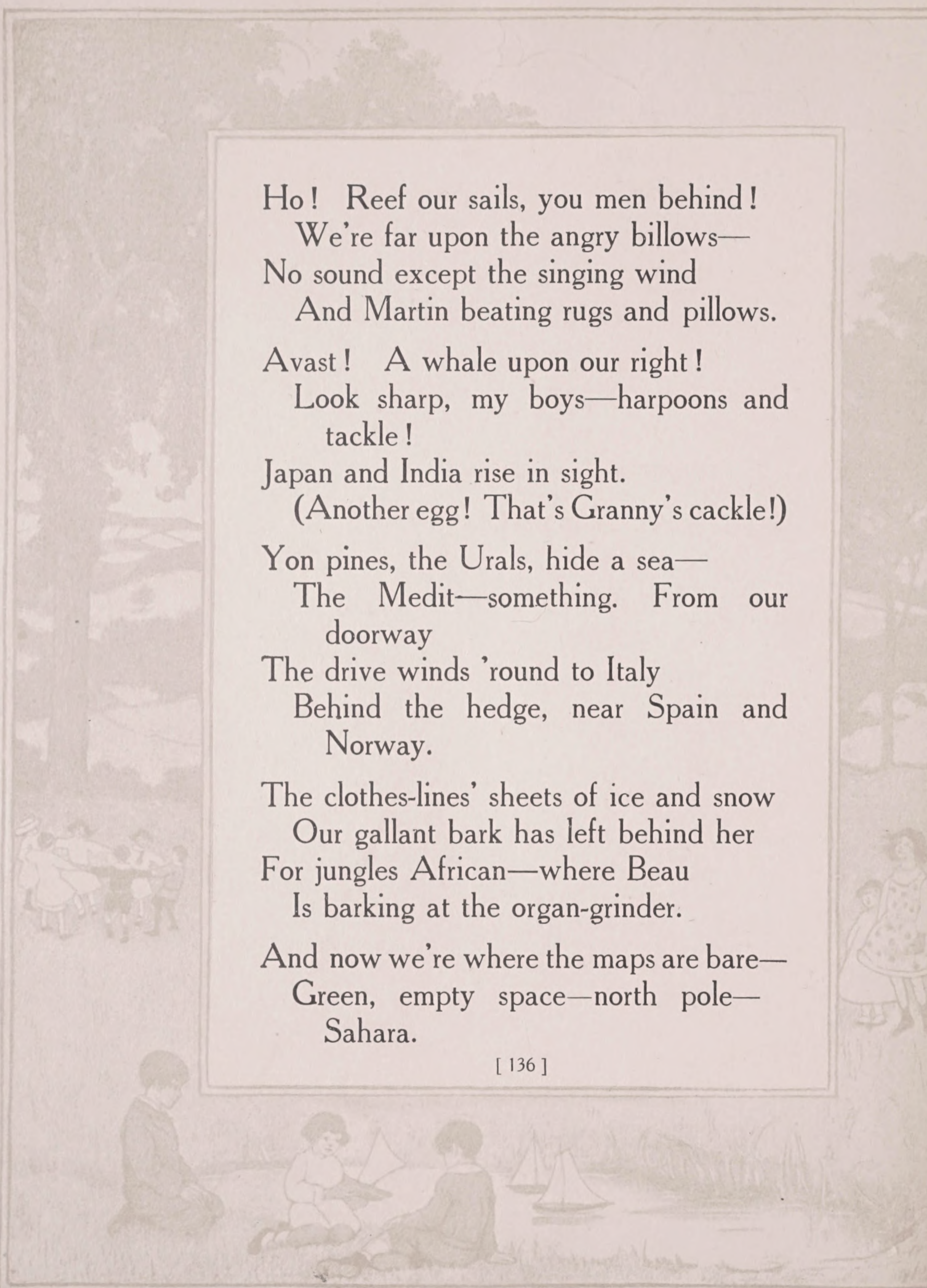
Japan and India rise in sight.  
(Another egg! That's Granny's cackle!)


Yon pines, the Urals, hide a sea—  
The Medit—something. From our  
doorway

The drive winds 'round to Italy  
Behind the hedge, near Spain and  
Norway.

The clothes-lines' sheets of ice and snow  
Our gallant bark has left behind her  
For jungles African—where Beau  
Is barking at the organ-grinder.

And now we're where the maps are bare—  
Green, empty space—north pole—  
Sahara.





See yellow Asia, over there,  
Where Martin's stopped to talk with  
Sarah!

Now Bagdad nears, Valhalla's plain;  
Now Greece, with heroes, gods and  
Argoes;

Now Arthur's Court, the Spanish Main,  
And pirate junks with slaves for  
cargoes.

Ho! Jason, Siegfried, Bedivere,  
Thor, Sindbad, Captain Kidd and Nero!  
Behold the ship that's drawing near  
With mast-perched Me, the conquering  
hero—

Who'll rescue maidens, succor kings,  
Free slaves, put monstrous beasts to  
slaughter—

Ay, cloud *your* fame by doing things  
Unparalleled on land and water.

And if, because your envy stirs,  
Ye bar my path with sword or trunch-  
eon,

I'll fight ye single-handed, Sirs!

• • • • •  
Oh dear! There goes the bell for  
luncheon!





## ALMOST FORGOTTEN

Out in the world where the dew's un-  
dried

And the dogwood's white in the sun,  
With my breakfast feeling so good inside,  
And a whole day more to run!

Isn't it fine how sunlit days  
Go on and on, and nobody pays?

The birds are twittering in the skies,  
The bees go bumbling past;  
The sun's blood-red when I close my eyes,  
And the brown road's won at last!

Isn't it nice how far roads reach,  
With something new at the end of  
each?

[ 139 ]



Why, which is the tooth that stung and  
throbb'd

All night, till the skies turned gray,  
While I twisted, and tossed, and moaned,  
and sobbed ?

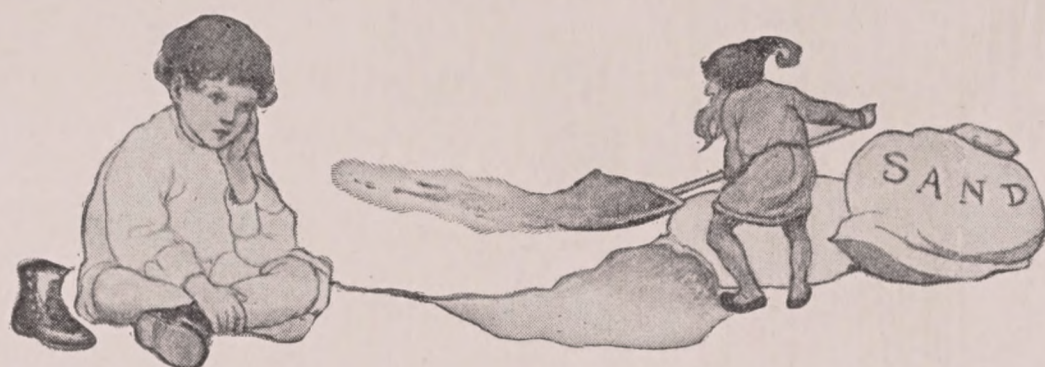
It seems like a dream to-day !

Isn't it queer how toothaches go ?

Oh, golden world, but I love you so !







## THE GARDEN HOSE

I dearly love the garden-hose  
When skies are bright and blue.  
He sprinkles all our flower rows,  
Our vegetables, too.

I love him 'cause his fizzy spray  
Makes rainbows o'er each bed;  
I love him 'cause when Mike's away  
He'll squirt for me, instead.

I love him for the pansy plots  
He saves from summer heats;  
I love him most for raising lots  
Of spinach, beans, and beets.

[ 141 ]



But, oh, when afternoon is fled  
And twilight's in the air,  
When I must cross the lawn to bed,  
And see him lying there—

A long, black, squirmy, coiled-up thing  
So silent in the gloom,  
I wish that I could give one spring  
Inside the sitting-room.

I think of boa-constrictors—those  
That clutch you for their prey;  
And then I hate the garden hose  
And wish he'd go away!



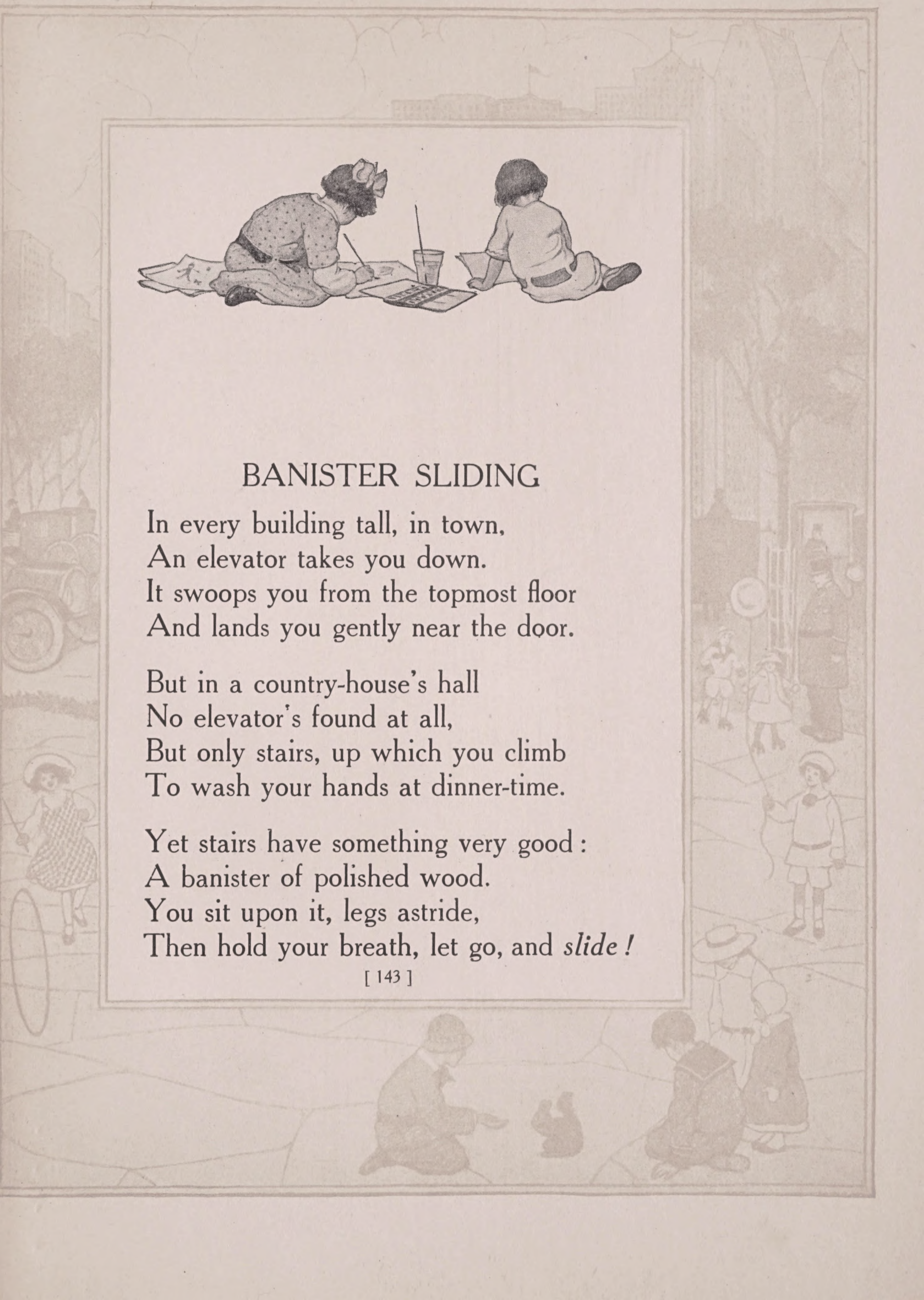


## BANISTER SLIDING

In every building tall, in town,  
An elevator takes you down.  
It swoops you from the topmost floor  
And lands you gently near the door.

But in a country-house's hall  
No elevator's found at all,  
But only stairs, up which you climb  
To wash your hands at dinner-time.

Yet stairs have something very good :  
A banister of polished wood.  
You sit upon it, legs astride,  
Then hold your breath, let go, and *slide* !



Ho! Going down? (I'll show you how)  
Our elevator's starting now!  
Sit steady, while the rail you hug—  
No stops until we reach the rug!

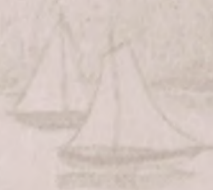
Ker-swish . . . ker-bump . . . and here  
we are—

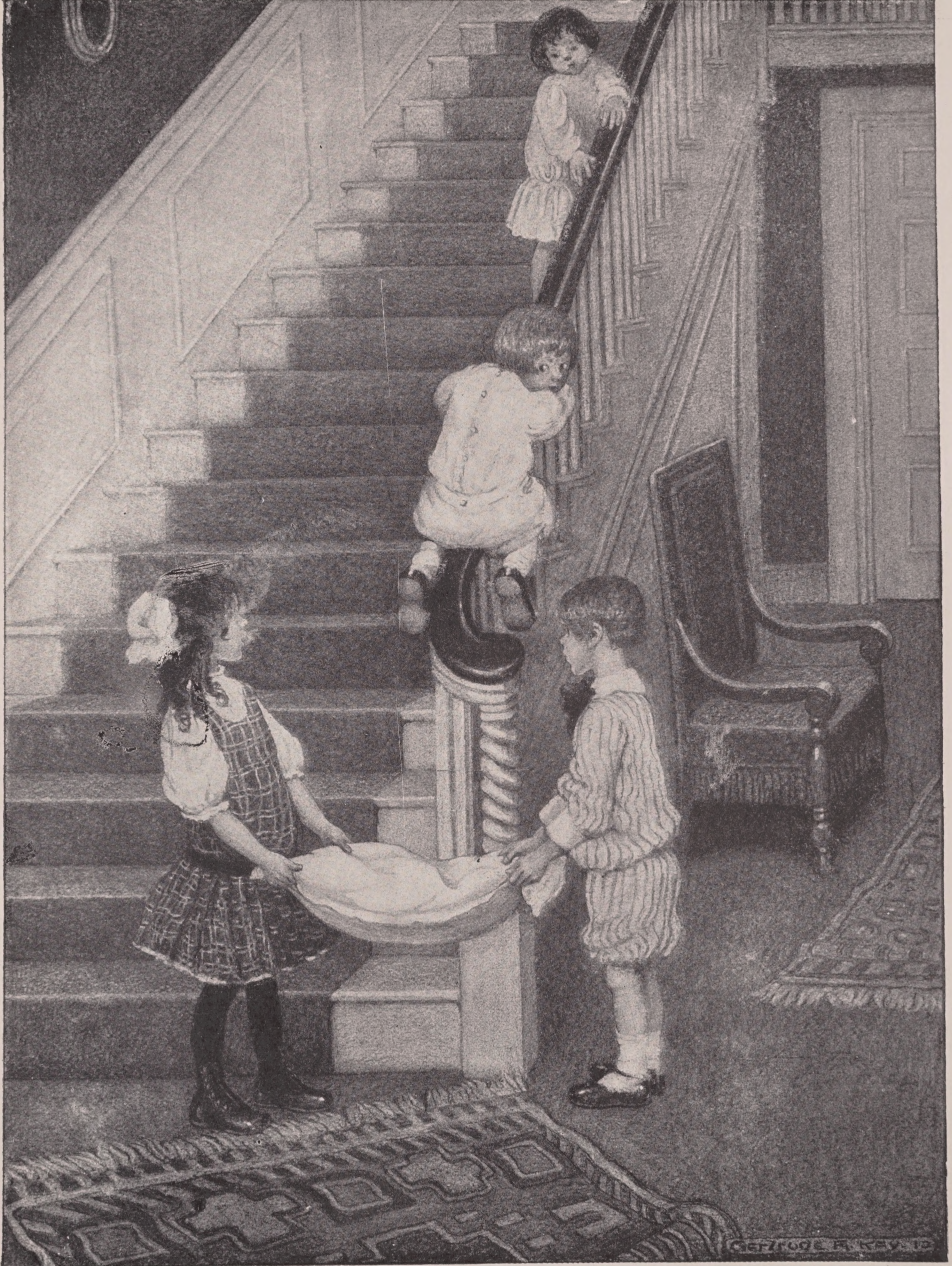
One swoop to earth from—see how far!  
And like the elevator, too,  
My breath goes "*Ha-a-ah!*" when all  
is through.

A real one, though, I'd love to run.  
It's mean that country homes have none,  
And that they're all in cities—when  
They're run by colored gentlemen.

It's meaner still, I've often thought,  
That country stairs are made so short;  
While city buildings, oh, so tall,  
Have got no banisters at all.

When I am rich I mean to buy  
A building twenty stories high  
With banisters both steep and strong,  
Down which I'll slide, the whole day long.





“One swoop to earth from—see how far”





## THE LAUNCHING OF SHIPS

Brook, a-swirl through the woodlands  
wild,  
Threading the patches of shriveled  
snow,

Sing me your secret this morning mild—  
Whence do you flow?


Hark to the chiming of freshets  
gray :

*From over the hills and far away!*

Clouds, adrift o'er the rain-washed earth,  
Heaping the depths of the pale young  
skies,

Tell of the land where your flock had  
birth—

Where did you rise?



And the whisper stirs in the tree-  
tops' sway :

*Over the hills and far away !*

Birds a-twitter and buds a-smile,  
Smells afloat as the breeze drifts in—  
Oh, but I've missed you, this wintry while !  
Where have you been ?

Echoing elves, I hear ye say :

*Over the hills and far away !*

Earth, a-thrill in the April air,  
Far blue hills where the snow-streaks  
lean,

Read me this message from everywhere—  
What does it mean ?

Oh, something sings in my ears  
all day :

*Over the hills and far away !*

Is it a snatch from some tale I love ?  
Some dream forgotten ? Some song I  
know ?

The haunting spell that some princess wove  
Ages ago ?



Is it an air that the elf-pipes play—  
*Over the hills and far away?*


Brook, I kneel by your moss-hung tide  
To launch three chips of a fallen tree.  
Hence, and search o'er the whole world  
wide,

My stout ships three.

Then turn ye back—if return ye  
may—

*From over the hills and far away!*





THE BUBBLE BROKEN

*Of all the grown-up folks we know,  
How many men would stop to blow  
A bubble, like this friendly man  
Who floats one up between us—so?*

*How big and clear! I've never seen  
Such pretty stripes of pink and green.  
Oh, see how fast they're racing round  
With little oily whirls between!*

*Its colored patches look to me  
Just like a schoolroom globe should be;  
And there's my face beside your face  
Afloat upon a purple sea.*

*Ah, now it's golden! That's the worst,  
Because you're so afraid 'twill burst.  
How old it's grown, how wonderful!  
Quick, then, let's see who'll catch it first.*

*Why, all I've caught is just your hand!  
Do bubbles go to fairyland?  
Perhaps some day we'll journey there  
And find them all, and understand.*

RD 7.4











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